

State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program

Nebraska Division of Rehabilitation Services - State Department of Education State Plan for Fiscal Year 2010 (submitted FY 2009)

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Preprint

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Footnotes

- [1] Required annually except for agencies that are independent commissions do not provide this attachment.
- [2] Required only of agencies requesting, or previously granted, a Waiver of Statewideness.

- [3] The following attachments should be submitted whenever the information needs to be updated.
- [4] The following attachments require annual updating and must be submitted each year.
- [5] Required Annually for All Agencies on an Order of Selection

State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program

Nebraska Division of Rehabilitation Services - State Department of Education State Plan for Fiscal Year 2010 (submitted FY 2009)

Section 1: State Certifications

- 1.1 The (enter the name of designated state agency or designated state unit below)...
- Nebraska Department of Education
- ... is authorized to submit this State Plan under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended ^[1] and its supplement under Title VI, Part B, of the Rehabilitation Act ^[2].
- 1.2 As a condition for the receipt of federal funds under Title I, Part B, of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, the... (enter the name of the designated state agency below) ^[3]
- Nebraska Department of Education
- ... agrees to operate and administer the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program in accordance with the provisions of this State Plan ^[4], the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations ^[5], policies and procedures established by the secretary. Funds made available under Section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act and the administration of the State Plan for the vocational rehabilitation services program.
- 1.3 As a condition for the receipt of federal funds under Title VI, Part B, of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated state agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the provisions of the supplement to this State Plan ^[6], the Rehabilitation Act and all applicable regulations ^[7], policies and procedures established by the secretary. Funds made available under Title VI, Part B, are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the Title I State Plan. Yes
- 1.4 The designated state agency and/or the designated state unit has the authority under state law to perform the functions of the state regarding this State Plan and its supplement. Yes
- 1.5 The state legally may carry out each provision of the State Plan and its supplement. Yes
- 1.6 All provisions of the State Plan and its supplement are consistent with state law. Yes

1.7 The (enter title of state officer below)

State Treasurer

... has the authority under state law to receive, hold and disburse federal funds made available under this State Plan and its supplement. Yes

1.8 The (enter title of state officer below)...

Commissioner of Education

... has the authority to submit this State Plan for vocational rehabilitation services and the State Plan supplement for supported employment services. Yes

1.9 The agency that submits this State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement. Yes

As the authorized signatory identified above, I hereby certify that I will sign, date and retain in the files of the designated state agency/designated state unit Section 1 of the Preprint, and separate Certification of Lobbying forms (Form ED-80-0013; available at <http://www.ed.gov/programs/8003/assurancesed80013.doc>) for both the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs.

Signed?	Yes
Name of Signatory	Roger D. Breed Ed.D.
Title of Signatory	Nebraska Commissioner of Education
Date Signed (mm/dd/yyyy)	06/15/2009

The designated state agency and/or the designated state unit provide the following assurance(s) in connection with the approval of the State Plan for FY 2010

Signed?

Name of Signatory
Title of Signatory
Date Signed (mm/dd/yyyy)

* The signatory of the assurance with the authority to execute and submit the State Plan will maintain a signed copy of the assurance(s) with the signed State Plan.

Section 1

Footnotes

- [1] Public Law 93 112, as amended by Public Laws 93 516, 95 602, 98 221, 99 506, 100-630, 102-569, 103-073, and 105-220.
- [2] Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.
- [3] All references in this plan to "designated state agency" or to "the state agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.
- [4] No funds under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved State Plan in accordance with Section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR part 361.
- [5] Applicable regulations include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR Parts 74, 76, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85 and 86 and the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program regulations in 34 CFR Part 361.
- [6] No funds under Title VI, Part B, of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the Title I State Plan in accordance with Section 625(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- [7] Applicable regulations include the EDGAR citations in footnote 5, 34 CFR Part 361, and 34 CFR Part 363.

Section 2: Public Comment on State Plan Policies and Procedures

- 2.1 Public participation requirements. (Section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.10(d), .20(a), (b), (d); and 363.11(g)(9))
- (a) Conduct of public meetings.
The designated state agency, prior to the adoption of any substantive policies or procedures governing the provision of vocational rehabilitation services under the State Plan and supported employment services under the supplement to the State Plan, including making any substantive amendments to the policies and procedures, conducts public meetings throughout the state to provide the public, including individuals with disabilities, an opportunity to comment on the policies or procedures.
- (b) Notice requirements.
The designated state agency, prior to conducting the public meetings, provides appropriate and sufficient notice throughout the state of the meetings in accordance with state law governing public meetings or, in the absence of state law governing public meetings, procedures developed by the state agency in consultation with the State Rehabilitation Council, if the agency has a council.
- (c) Special consultation requirements.
The state agency actively consults with the director of the Client Assistance Program, the State Rehabilitation Council, if the agency has a council and, as appropriate, Indian tribes, tribal organizations and native Hawaiian organizations on its policies and procedures governing the provision of vocational rehabilitation services under the State Plan and supported employment services under the supplement to the State Plan.

Section 3: Submission of the State Plan and its Supplement

- 3.1 Submission and revisions of the State Plan and its supplement. (Sections 101(a)(1), (23) and 625(a)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act; Section 501 of the Workforce Investment Act; 34 CFR 76.140; 361.10(e), (f), and (g); and 363.10)
- 0 (a) The state submits to the commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration the State Plan and its supplement on the same date that the state submits either a State Plan under Section 112 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 or a state unified plan under Section 501 of that Rehabilitation Act.
- 0 (b) The state submits only those policies, procedures or descriptions required under this State

Plan and its supplement that have not been previously submitted to and approved by the commissioner.

- 0 (c) The state submits to the commissioner, at such time and in such manner as the commissioner determines to be appropriate, reports containing annual updates of the information relating to the:
1. comprehensive system of personnel development;
 2. assessments, estimates, goals and priorities, and reports of progress;
 3. innovation and expansion activities; and
 4. other updates of information required under Title I, Part B, or Title VI, Part B, of the Rehabilitation Act that are requested by the commissioner.
- 0 (d) The State Plan and its supplement are in effect subject to the submission of modifications the state determines to be necessary or the commissioner requires based on a change in state policy, a change in federal law, including regulations, an interpretation of the Rehabilitation Act by a federal court or the highest court of the state, or a finding by the commissioner of state noncompliance with the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act, 34 CFR 361 or 34 CFR 363.

3.2 Supported Employment State Plan supplement. (Sections 101(a)(22) and 625(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.34 and 363.10)

- 0 (a) The state has an acceptable plan for carrying out Part B, of Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act that provides for the use of funds under that part to supplement funds made available under Part B, of Title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the cost of services leading to supported employment.
- 0 (b) The Supported Employment State Plan, including any needed annual revisions, is submitted as a supplement to the State Plan.

Section 4: Administration of the State Plan

4.1 Designated state agency and designated state unit. (Section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.13(a) and (b))

(a) Designated state agency.

- (1) There is a state agency designated as the sole state agency to administer the State Plan or to supervise its administration in a political subdivision of the state by a sole local agency.
- (2) The designated state agency is:

No (A) a state agency that is primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation or vocational and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities; or

Yes (B) a state agency that is not primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation or vocational and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities and includes a vocational rehabilitation unit as provided in paragraph (b) of this section.

(3) In American Samoa, the designated state agency is the governor.

(b) Designated state unit.

- (1) If the designated state agency is not primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation or vocational and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities, in accordance with subparagraph 4.1(a)(2)(B) of this section, the state agency includes a vocational rehabilitation bureau, division or unit that:

- (A) is primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation or vocational and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities and is responsible for the administration of the designated state agency's vocational rehabilitation program under the State Plan;
 - (B) has a full-time director;
 - (C) has a staff, at least 90 percent of whom are employed full-time on the rehabilitation work of the organizational unit; and
 - (D) is located at an organizational level and has an organizational status within the designated state agency comparable to that of other major organizational units of the designated state agency.
- (2) The name of the designated state vocational rehabilitation unit is Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation

4.2 State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council. (Sections 101(a)(21) and 105 of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.16 and .17)

The State Plan must contain one of the following assurances.

No (a) The designated state agency is an independent state commission that:

- (1) is responsible under state law for operating or overseeing the operation of the vocational rehabilitation program in the state and is primarily concerned with the vocational rehabilitation or vocational and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities in accordance with subparagraph 4.1(a)(2)(A) of this section.
- (2) is consumer controlled by persons who:
 - (A) are individuals with physical or mental impairments that substantially limit major life activities; and
 - (B) represent individuals with a broad range of disabilities, unless the designated state unit under the direction of the commission is the state agency for individuals who are blind;
- (3) includes family members, advocates or other representatives of individuals with mental impairments; and
- (4) undertakes the functions set forth in Section 105(c)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.17(h)(4).

or

- Yes (b) The state has established a State Rehabilitation Council that meets the criteria set forth in Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act, 34 CFR 361.17 and the designated state unit:
- (1) jointly with the State Rehabilitation Council develops, agrees to and reviews annually state goals and priorities and jointly submits to the commissioner annual reports of progress in accordance with the provisions of Section 101(a)(15) of the Rehabilitation Act, 34 CFR 361.29 and subsection 4.11 of this State Plan;
 - (2) regularly consults with the State Rehabilitation Council regarding the development, implementation and revision of state policies and procedures of general applicability pertaining to the provision of vocational rehabilitation services;
 - (3) includes in the State Plan and in any revision to the State Plan a summary of input provided by the State Rehabilitation Council, including recommendations from the annual report of the council described in Section 105(c)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.17(h)(5), the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction described in Section 105(c)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.17(h)(4), and other reports prepared by the council and the response of the designated state unit to the input and recommendations, including explanations for rejecting any input or recommendation; and
 - (4) transmits to the council:
 - (A) all plans, reports and other information required under 34 CFR 361 to be

- submitted to the commissioner;
- (B) all policies and information on all practices and procedures of general applicability provided to or used by rehabilitation personnel in carrying out this State Plan and its supplement; and
- (C) copies of due process hearing decisions issued under 34 CFR 361.57, which are transmitted in such a manner as to ensure that the identity of the participants in the hearings is kept confidential.

- (c) If the designated state unit has a State Rehabilitation Council, Attachment 4.2(c) provides a summary of the input provided by the council consistent with the provisions identified in subparagraph (b)(3) of this section; the response of the designated state unit to the input and recommendations; and, explanations for the rejection of any input or any recommendation.

4.3 Consultations regarding the administration of the State Plan. (Section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.21)

The designated state agency takes into account, in connection with matters of general policy arising in the administration of the plan and its supplement, the views of:

- (a) individuals and groups of individuals who are recipients of vocational rehabilitation services or, as appropriate, the individuals' representatives;
- (b) personnel working in programs that provide vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities;
- (c) providers of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities;
- (d) the director of the Client Assistance Program; and
- (e) the State Rehabilitation Council, if the state has a council.

4.4 Nonfederal share. (Sections 7(14) and 101(a)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 80.24 and 361.60)

The nonfederal share of the cost of carrying out this State Plan is 21.3 percent and is provided through the financial participation by the state or, if the state elects, by the state and local agencies.

4.5 Local administration. (Sections 7(24) and 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.5(b)(47) and .15)

The State Plan provides for the administration of the plan by a local agency.

No

If "Yes", the designated state agency:

- (a) ensures that each local agency is under the supervision of the designated state unit with the sole local agency, as that term is defined in Section 7(24) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.5(b)(47), responsible for the administration of the vocational rehabilitation program within the political subdivision that it serves; and
- (b) develops methods that each local agency will use to administer the vocational rehabilitation program in accordance with the State Plan.

4.6 Shared funding and administration of joint programs. (Section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.27)

The State Plan provides for the state agency to share funding and administrative responsibility

with another state agency or local public agency to carry out a joint program to provide services to individuals with disabilities.

No

If "Yes", the designated state agency submits to the commissioner for approval a plan that describes its shared funding and administrative arrangement. The plan must include:

- (a) a description of the nature and scope of the joint program;
- (b) the services to be provided under the joint program;
- (c) the respective roles of each participating agency in the administration and provision of services; and
- (d) the share of the costs to be assumed by each agency.

4.7 Statewideness and waivers of statewideness. (Section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.25, .26, and .60(b)(3)(i) and (ii))

- (a) Services provided under the State Plan are available in all political subdivisions of the state.
- (b) The state unit may provide services in one or more political subdivisions of the state that increase services or expand the scope of services that are available statewide under this State Plan if the:
 - (1) nonfederal share of the cost of these services is met from funds provided by a local public agency, including funds contributed to a local public agency by a private agency, organization or individual;
 - (2) services are likely to promote the vocational rehabilitation of substantially larger numbers of individuals with disabilities or of individuals with disabilities with particular types of impairments; and
 - (3) state, for purposes other than the establishment of a community rehabilitation program or the construction of a particular facility for community rehabilitation program purposes, requests in Attachment 4.7(b)(3) a waiver of the statewideness requirement in accordance with the following requirements:
 - (A) identification of the types of services to be provided;
 - (B) written assurance from the local public agency that it will make available to the state unit the nonfederal share of funds;
 - (C) written assurance that state unit approval will be obtained for each proposed service before it is put into effect; and
 - (D) written assurance that all other State Plan requirements, including a state's order of selection, will apply to all services approved under the waiver.
- (c) Contributions, consistent with the requirements of 34 CFR 361.60(b)(3)(ii), by private entities of earmarked funds for particular geographic areas within the state may be used as part of the nonfederal share without the state requesting a waiver of the statewideness requirement provided that the state notifies the commissioner that it cannot provide the full nonfederal share without using the earmarked funds.

4.8 Cooperation, collaboration and coordination. (Sections 101(a)(11), (24)(B), and 625(b)(4) and (5) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.22, .23, .24, and .31, and 363.11(e))

- (a) Cooperative agreements with other components of statewide work force investment system.

The designated state agency or the designated state unit has cooperative agreements with other entities that are components of the statewide work force investment system and replicates those agreements at the local level between individual offices of the designated state unit and local entities carrying out the One-Stop service delivery system or other activities through the statewide work force investment system.
- (b) Cooperation and coordination with other agencies and entities.

Attachment 4.8(b) (1)-(4) describes the designated state agency's:

- (1) cooperation with and use of the services and facilities of the federal, state, and local agencies and programs, including programs carried out by the undersecretary for Rural Development of the United States Department of Agriculture and state use contracting programs, to the extent that those agencies and programs are not carrying out activities through the statewide work force investment system;
- (2) coordination, in accordance with the requirements of paragraph 4.8(c) of this section, with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services;
- (3) establishment of cooperative agreements with private nonprofit vocational rehabilitation service providers, in accordance with the requirements of paragraph 5.10(b) of the State Plan; and,
- (4) efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other state agencies and entities with respect to the provision of supported employment and extended services for individuals with the most significant disabilities, in accordance with the requirements of subsection 6.5 of the supplement to this State Plan.

(c) Coordination with education officials.

- (1) Attachment 4.8(b)(2) describes the plans, policies and procedures for coordination between the designated state agency and education officials responsible for the public education of students with disabilities that are designed to facilitate the transition of the students who are individuals with disabilities from the receipt of educational services in school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services under the responsibility of the designated state agency.
- (2) The State Plan description must:

- (A) provide for the development and approval of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with 34 CFR 361.45 as early as possible during the transition planning process but, at the latest, before each student determined to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services leaves the school setting or if the designated state unit is operating on an order of selection before each eligible student able to be served under the order leaves the school setting; and
- (B) include information on a formal interagency agreement with the state educational agency that, at a minimum, provides for:
 - (i) consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to postschool activities, including vocational rehabilitation services;
 - (ii) transition planning by personnel of the designated state agency and the educational agency for students with disabilities that facilitates the development and completion of their individualized education programs under Section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;
 - (iii) roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining state lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services; and
 - (iv) procedures for outreach to students with disabilities as early as possible during the transition planning process and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

(d) Coordination with statewide independent living council and independent living centers.

The designated state unit, the Statewide Independent Living Council established under Section 705 of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 364, and the independent living centers described in Part C of Title VII of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 366 have developed working relationships and coordinate their activities.

(e) Cooperative agreement with recipients of grants for services to American Indians.

- (1) There is in the state a recipient(s) of a grant under Part C of Title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services for American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing on or near federal and state reservations.
No
- (2) If "Yes", the designated state agency has entered into a formal cooperative agreement that meets the following requirements with each grant recipient in the state that receives funds under Part C of Title I of the Rehabilitation Act:
 - (A) strategies for interagency referral and information sharing that will assist in eligibility determinations and the development of individualized plans for employment;
 - (B) procedures for ensuring that American Indians who are individuals with disabilities and are living near a reservation or tribal service area are provided vocational rehabilitation services; and
 - (C) provisions for sharing resources in cooperative studies and assessments, joint training activities, and other collaborative activities designed to improve the provision of services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities.

4.9 Methods of administration. (Section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.12, .19 and .51(a) and (b))

(a) In general.

The state agency employs methods of administration, including procedures to ensure accurate data collection and financial accountability, found by the commissioner to be necessary for the proper and efficient administration of the plan and for carrying out all the functions for which the state is responsible under the plan and 34 CFR 361.

(b) Employment of individuals with disabilities.

The designated state agency and entities carrying out community rehabilitation programs in the state, who are in receipt of assistance under Part B, of Title I of the Rehabilitation Act and this State Plan, take affirmative action to employ and advance in employment qualified individuals with disabilities covered under and on the same terms and conditions as set forth in Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act.

(c) Facilities.

Any facility used in connection with the delivery of services assisted under this State Plan meets program accessibility requirements consistent with the provisions, as applicable, of the Architectural Barriers Rehabilitation Act of 1968, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the regulations implementing these laws.

4.10 Comprehensive system of personnel development. (Section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.18)

Attachment 4.10 describes the designated state agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified state rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated state unit. The description includes the following:

(a) Data system on personnel and personnel development.

Development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs and personnel development with respect to:

(1) Qualified personnel needs.

- (A) The number of personnel who are employed by the state agency in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;

- (B) The number of personnel currently needed by the state agency to provide vocational rehabilitation services, broken down by personnel category; and
- (C) Projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the state agency to provide vocational rehabilitation services in the state in five years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

(2) Personnel development.

- (A) A list of the institutions of higher education in the state that are preparing vocational rehabilitation professionals, by type of program;
- (B) The number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and
- (C) The number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

(b) Plan for recruitment, preparation and retention of qualified personnel.

Development, updating on an annual basis, and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel based on the data collection and analysis system described in paragraph (a) of this subsection and that provides for the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated state unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare and retain personnel who are qualified in accordance with paragraph (c) of this subsection, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

(c) Personnel standards.

Policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards to ensure that designated state unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained, including:

- (1) standards that are consistent with any national- or state-approved or recognized certification, licensing, registration, or, in the absence of these requirements, other comparable requirements (including state personnel requirements) that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing vocational rehabilitation services.
- (2) To the extent that existing standards are not based on the highest requirements in the state applicable to a particular profession or discipline, the steps the state is currently taking and the steps the state plans to take in accordance with the written plan to retrain or hire personnel within the designated state unit to meet standards that are based on the highest requirements in the state, including measures to notify designated state unit personnel, the institutions of higher education identified in subparagraph (a)(2), and other public agencies of these steps and the time lines for taking each step.
- (3) The written plan required by subparagraph (c)(2) describes the following:
 - (A) specific strategies for retraining, recruiting and hiring personnel;
 - (B) the specific time period by which all state unit personnel will meet the standards required by subparagraph (c)(1);
 - (C) procedures for evaluating the designated state unit's progress in hiring or retraining personnel to meet applicable personnel standards within the established time period; and
 - (D) the identification of initial minimum qualifications that the designated state unit will require of newly hired personnel when the state unit is unable to hire new personnel who meet the established personnel standards and the identification

of a plan for training such individuals to meet the applicable standards within the time period established for all state unit personnel to meet the established personnel standards.

(d) Staff development.

Policies, procedures and activities to ensure that all personnel employed by the designated state unit receive appropriate and adequate training. The narrative describes the following:

- (1) A system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated state unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement and rehabilitation technology.
- (2) Procedures for the acquisition and dissemination to designated state unit professionals and paraprofessionals significant knowledge from research and other sources.

(e) Personnel to address individual communication needs.

Availability of personnel within the designated state unit or obtaining the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability or in appropriate modes of communication with applicants or eligible individuals.

(f) Coordination of personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Procedures and activities to coordinate the designated state unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

4.11. Statewide assessment; annual estimates; annual state goals and priorities; strategies; and progress reports. (Sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2) and 625(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.17(h)(2), .29, and 363.11(b))

(a) Comprehensive statewide assessment.

- (1) Attachment 4.11(a) documents the results of a comprehensive, statewide assessment, jointly conducted every three years by the designated state unit and the State Rehabilitation Council (if the state has such a council). The assessment describes:

- (A) the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the state, particularly the vocational rehabilitation services needs of:

- (i) individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;
- (ii) individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program carried out under this State Plan; and
- (iii) individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide work force investment system.

- (B) The need to establish, develop or improve community rehabilitation programs within the state.

- (2) For any year in which the state updates the assessments, the designated state unit submits to the commissioner a report containing information regarding updates to the assessments.

(b) Annual estimates.

Attachment 4.11(b) identifies on an annual basis state estimates of the:

- (1) number of individuals in the state who are eligible for services under the plan;
- (2) number of eligible individuals who will receive services provided with funds provided under Part B of Title I of the Rehabilitation Act and under Part B of Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act, including, if the designated state agency uses an order of selection

- in accordance with subparagraph 5.3(b)(2) of this State Plan, estimates of the number of individuals to be served under each priority category within the order; and
- (3) costs of the services described in subparagraph (b)(1), including, if the designated state agency uses an order of selection, the service costs for each priority category within the order.

(c) Goals and priorities.

- (1) Attachment 4.11(c)(1) identifies the goals and priorities of the state that are jointly developed or revised, as applicable, with and agreed to by the State Rehabilitation Council, if the agency has a council, in carrying out the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs.
- (2) The designated state agency submits to the commissioner a report containing information regarding any revisions in the goals and priorities for any year the state revises the goals and priorities.
- (3) Order of selection.

If the state agency implements an order of selection, consistent with subparagraph 5.3(b)(2) of the State Plan, Attachment 4.11(c)(3):

- (A) shows the order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services;
 - (B) provides a justification for the order; and
 - (C) identifies the service and outcome goals, and the time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order.
- (4) Goals and plans for distribution of Title VI, Part B, funds.

Attachment 4.11(c)(4) specifies, consistent with subsection 6.4 of the State Plan supplement, the state's goals and priorities with respect to the distribution of funds received under Section 622 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services.

(d) Strategies.

- (1) Attachment 4.11(d) describes the strategies, including:
 - (A) the methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities, including how a broad range of assistive technology services and assistive technology devices will be provided to those individuals at each stage of the rehabilitation process and how those services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities on a statewide basis;
 - (B) outreach procedures to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including those with the most significant disabilities in accordance with subsection 6.6 of the State Plan supplement, and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program;
 - (C) as applicable, the plan of the state for establishing, developing or improving community rehabilitation programs;
 - (D) strategies to improve the performance of the state with respect to the evaluation standards and performance indicators established pursuant to Section 106 of the Rehabilitation Act; and
 - (E) strategies for assisting other components of the statewide work force investment system in assisting individuals with disabilities.
- (2) Attachment 4.11 (d) describes how the designated state agency uses these strategies to:
 - (A) address the needs identified in the assessment conducted under paragraph 4.11(a) and achieve the goals and priorities identified in the State Plan attachments under paragraph 4.11(c);
 - (B) support the innovation and expansion activities identified in subparagraph

- 4.12(a)(1) and (2) of the plan; and
- (C) overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Supported Employment Services Program.
- (e) Evaluation and reports of progress.
 - (1) The designated state unit and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the state unit has a council, jointly submits to the commissioner an annual report on the results of an evaluation of the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program and the progress made in improving the effectiveness of the program from the previous year.
 - (2) Attachment 4.11(e)(2):
 - (A) provides an evaluation of the extent to which the goals identified in Attachment 4.11(c)(1) and, if applicable, Attachment 4.11(c)(3) were achieved;
 - (B) identifies the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals and priorities;
 - (C) describes the factors that impeded their achievement, to the extent they were not achieved;
 - (D) assesses the performance of the state on the standards and indicators established pursuant to Section 106 of the Rehabilitation Act; and
 - (E) provides a report consistent with paragraph 4.12(c) of the plan on how the funds reserved for innovation and expansion activities were utilized in the preceding year.

4.12 Innovation and expansion. (Section 101(a)(18) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.35)

- (a) The designated state agency reserves and uses a portion of the funds allotted to the state under Section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the:
 - (1) development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities under this State Plan, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities, consistent with the findings of the statewide assessment identified in Attachment 4.11(a) and goals and priorities of the state identified in Attachments 4.11(c)(1) and, if applicable, Attachment 4.11(c)(3); and
 - (2) support of the funding for the State Rehabilitation Council, if the state has such a council, consistent with the resource plan prepared under Section 105(d)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.17(i), and the funding of the Statewide Independent Living Council, consistent with the resource plan prepared under Section 705(e)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 364.21(i).
- (b) Attachment 4.11 (d) describes how the reserved funds identified in subparagraph 4.12(a)(1) and (2) will be utilized.
- (c) Attachment 4.11(e)(2) describes how the reserved funds were utilized in the preceding year.

4.13 Reports. (Section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.40)

- (a) The designated state unit submits reports in the form and level of detail and at the time required by the commissioner regarding applicants for and eligible individuals receiving services under the State Plan.
- (b) Information submitted in the reports provides a complete count, unless sampling techniques are used, of the applicants and eligible individuals in a manner that permits the greatest possible cross-classification of data and protects the confidentiality of the identity of each individual.

Section 5: Administration of the Provision of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

5.1 Information and referral services. (Sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.37)

The designated state agency has implemented an information and referral system that is adequate to ensure that individuals with disabilities, including individuals who do not meet the agency's order of selection criteria for receiving vocational rehabilitation services if the agency is operating on an order of selection, are provided accurate vocational rehabilitation information and guidance, including counseling and referral for job placement, using appropriate modes of communication, to assist such individuals in preparing for, securing, retaining or regaining employment, and are referred to other appropriate federal and state programs, including other components of the statewide work force investment system in the state.

5.2 Residency. (Section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.42(c)(1))

The designated state unit imposes no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the state.

5.3 Ability to serve all eligible individuals; order of selection for services. (Sections 12(d) and 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.36)

(a) The designated state unit is able to provide the full range of services listed in Section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.48, as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the state who apply for services.

No

(b) If No:

(1) Individuals with the most significant disabilities, in accordance with criteria established by the state, are selected first for vocational rehabilitation services before other individuals with disabilities.

(2) Attachment 4.11(c)(3):

(A) shows the order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services;

(B) provides a justification for the order of selection; and

(C) identifies the state's service and outcome goals and the time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order.

(3) Eligible individuals who do not meet the order of selection criteria have access to the services provided through the designated state unit's information and referral system established under Section 101(a)(20) of the Rehabilitation Act, 34 CFR 361.37, and subsection 5.1 of this State Plan.

5.4 Availability of comparable services and benefits. (Sections 101(a)(8) and 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.53)

(a) Prior to providing any vocational rehabilitation services, except those services identified in paragraph (b), to an eligible individual or to members of the individual's family, the state unit determines whether comparable services and benefits exist under any other program and whether those services and benefits are available to the individual.

(b) The following services are exempt from a determination of the availability of comparable services and benefits:

(1) assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs by qualified personnel, including, if appropriate, an assessment by personnel skilled in rehabilitation technology;

- (2) counseling and guidance, including information and support services to assist an individual in exercising informed choice consistent with the provisions of Section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act;
 - (3) referral and other services to secure needed services from other agencies, including other components of the statewide work force investment system, through agreements developed under Section 101(a)(11) of the Rehabilitation Act, if such services are not available under this State Plan;
 - (4) job-related services, including job search and placement assistance, job retention services, follow-up services, and follow-along services;
 - (5) rehabilitation technology, including telecommunications, sensory and other technological aids and devices; and
 - (6) post-employment services consisting of the services listed under subparagraphs (1) through (5) of this paragraph.
- (c) The requirements of paragraph (a) of this section do not apply if the determination of the availability of comparable services and benefits under any other program would interrupt or delay:
- (1) progress of the individual toward achieving the employment outcome identified in the individualized plan for employment;
 - (2) an immediate job placement; or
 - (3) provision of vocational rehabilitation services to any individual who is determined to be at extreme medical risk, based on medical evidence provided by an appropriate qualified medical professional.
- (d) The governor in consultation with the designated state vocational rehabilitation agency and other appropriate agencies ensures that an interagency agreement or other mechanism for interagency coordination that meets the requirements of Section 101(a)(8)(B)(i)-(iv) of the Rehabilitation Act takes effect between the designated state unit and any appropriate public entity, including the state Medicaid program, a public institution of higher education, and a component of the statewide work force investment system to ensure the provision of the vocational rehabilitation services identified in Section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.48, other than the services identified in paragraph (b) of this section, that are included in the individualized plan for employment of an eligible individual, including the provision of those vocational rehabilitation services during the pendency of any dispute that may arise in the implementation of the interagency agreement or other mechanism for interagency coordination.

5.5 Individualized plan for employment. (Section 101(a)(9) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.45 and .46)

- (a) An individualized plan for employment meeting the requirements of Section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.45 and .46 is developed and implemented in a timely manner for each individual determined to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services, except if the state has implemented an order of selection, and is developed and implemented for each individual to whom the designated state unit is able to provide vocational rehabilitation services.
- (b) Services to an eligible individual are provided in accordance with the provisions of the individualized plan for employment.

5.6 Opportunity to make informed choices regarding the selection of services and providers. (Sections 101(a)(19) and 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.52)

Applicants and eligible individuals or, as appropriate, their representatives are provided information and support services to assist in exercising informed choice throughout the rehabilitation process, consistent with the provisions of Section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.52.

5.7 Services to American Indians. (Section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.30)

The designated state unit provides vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the state to the same extent as the designated state agency provides such services to other significant populations of individuals with disabilities residing in the state.

5.8 Annual review of individuals in extended employment or other employment under special certificate provisions of the fair labor standards act of 1938. (Section 101(a)(14) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.55)

- (a) The designated state unit conducts an annual review and reevaluation of the status of each individual with a disability served under this State Plan:
 - (1) who has achieved an employment outcome in which the individual is compensated in accordance with Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act (29 U.S.C. 214(c)); or
 - (2) whose record of services is closed while the individual is in extended employment on the basis that the individual is unable to achieve an employment outcome in an integrated setting or that the individual made an informed choice to remain in extended employment.
- (b) The designated state unit carries out the annual review and reevaluation for two years after the individual's record of services is closed (and thereafter if requested by the individual or, if appropriate, the individual's representative) to determine the interests, priorities and needs of the individual with respect to competitive employment or training for competitive employment.
- (c) The designated state unit makes maximum efforts, including the identification and provision of vocational rehabilitation services, reasonable accommodations and other necessary support services, to assist the individuals described in paragraph (a) in engaging in competitive employment.
- (d) The individual with a disability or, if appropriate, the individual's representative has input into the review and reevaluation and, through signed acknowledgement, attests that the review and reevaluation have been conducted.

5.9 Use of Title I funds for construction of facilities. (Sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.49(a)(1), .61 and .62(b))

If the state elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs, the following requirements are met:

- (a) The federal share of the cost of construction for facilities for a fiscal year does not exceed an amount equal to 10 percent of the state's allotment under Section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for that fiscal year.
- (b) The provisions of Section 306 of the Rehabilitation Act that were in effect prior to the enactment of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 apply to such construction.
- (c) There is compliance with the requirements in 34 CFR 361.62(b) that ensure the use of the construction authority will not reduce the efforts of the designated state agency in providing other vocational rehabilitation services other than the establishment of facilities for community rehabilitation programs.

5.10 Contracts and cooperative agreements. (Section 101(a)(24) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.31 and .32)

- (a) Contracts with for-profit organizations.

The designated state agency has the authority to enter into contracts with for-profit organizations for the purpose of providing, as vocational rehabilitation services, on-the-job training and related programs for individuals with disabilities under Part A of Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act, upon the determination by the designated state agency that for-profit organizations are better qualified to provide vocational rehabilitation services than

nonprofit agencies and organizations.

- (b) Cooperative agreements with private nonprofit organizations.

Attachment 4.8(b)(3) describes the manner in which the designated state agency establishes cooperative agreements with private nonprofit vocational rehabilitation service providers.

Section 6: Program Administration

- 6.1 Designated state agency. (Section 625(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 363.11(a))

The designated state agency for vocational rehabilitation services identified in paragraph 1.2 of the Title I State Plan is the state agency designated to administer the State Supported Employment Services Program authorized under Title VI, Part B, of the Rehabilitation Act.

- 6.2 Statewide assessment of supported employment services needs. (Section 625(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 363.11(b))

Attachment 4.11(a) describes the results of the comprehensive, statewide needs assessment conducted under Section 101(a)(15)(a)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and subparagraph 4.11(a)(1) of the Title I State Plan with respect to the rehabilitation needs of individuals with most significant disabilities and their need for supported employment services, including needs related to coordination.

- 6.3 Quality, scope and extent of supported employment services. (Section 625(b)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 363.11(c) and .50(b)(2))

Attachment 6.3 describes the quality, scope and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities who are eligible to receive supported employment services. The description also addresses the timing of the transition to extended services to be provided by relevant state agencies, private nonprofit organizations or other sources following the cessation of supported employment service provided by the designated state agency.

- 6.4 Goals and plans for distribution of Title VI, Part B, funds. (Section 625(b)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 363.11(d) and .20)

Attachment 4.11(c)(4) identifies the state's goals and plans with respect to the distribution of funds received under Section 622 of the Rehabilitation Act.

- 6.5 Evidence of collaboration with respect to supported employment services and extended services. (Sections 625(b)(4) and (5) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 363.11(e))

Attachment 4.8(b)(4) describes the efforts of the designated state agency to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other state agencies and other appropriate entities to assist in the provision of supported employment services and other public or nonprofit agencies or organizations within the state, employers, natural supports, and other entities with respect to the provision of extended services.

- 6.6 Minority outreach. (34 CFR 363.11(f))

Attachment 4.11(d) includes a description of the designated state agency's outreach procedures for identifying and serving individuals with the most significant disabilities who are minorities.

6.7 Reports. (Sections 625(b)(8) and 626 of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 363.11(h) and .52)

The designated state agency submits reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the commissioner may require and collects the information required by Section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under Part B, of Title VI and individuals receiving supported employment services under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act.

Section 7: Financial Administration

7.1 Five percent limitation on administrative costs. (Section 625(b)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 363.11(g)(8))

The designated state agency expends no more than five percent of the state's allotment under Section 622 of the Rehabilitation Act for administrative costs in carrying out the State Supported Employment Services Program.

7.2 Use of funds in providing services. (Sections 623 and 625(b)(6)(A) and (D) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 363.6(c)(2)(iv), .11(g)(1) and (4))

- (a) Funds made available under Title VI, Part B, of the Rehabilitation Act are used by the designated state agency only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities who are eligible to receive such services.
- (b) Funds provided under Title VI, Part B, are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I, Part B, of the Rehabilitation Act, in providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment.
- (c) Funds provided under Part B of Title VI or Title I of the Rehabilitation Act are not used to provide extended services to individuals who are eligible under Part B of Title VI or Title I of the Rehabilitation Act.

Section 8: Provision of Supported Employment Services

8.1 Scope of supported employment services. (Sections 7(36) and 625(b)(6)(F) and (G) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.5(b)(54), 363.11(g)(6) and (7))

- (a) Supported employment services are those services as defined in Section 7(36) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.5(b)(54).
- (b) To the extent job skills training is provided, the training is provided on-site.
- (c) Supported employment services include placement in an integrated setting for the maximum number of hours possible based on the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice of individuals with the most significant disabilities.

8.2 Comprehensive assessments of individuals with significant disabilities. (Sections 7(2)(B) and 625(b)(6)(B); 34 CFR 361.5(b)(6)(ii) and 363.11(g)(2))

The comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under Section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome.

- 8.3 Individualized plan for employment. (Sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 625(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.46(b) and 363.11(g)(3) and (5))
- (a) An individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of Section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.45 and .46 is developed and updated using funds under Title I.
 - (b) The individualized plan for employment:
 - (1) specifies the supported employment services to be provided;
 - (2) describes the expected extended services needed; and
 - (3) identifies the source of extended services, including natural supports, or, to the extent that it is not possible to identify the source of extended services at the time the individualized plan for employment plan is developed, a statement describing the basis for concluding that there is a reasonable expectation that sources will become available.
 - (c) Services provided under an individualized plan for employment are coordinated with services provided under other individualized plans established under other federal or state programs.

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State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program

Nebraska Division of Rehabilitation Services - State Department of Education State Plan for Fiscal Year 2010 (submitted FY 2009)

Attachment 4.2(c) Input of State Rehabilitation Council

Required annually by all agencies except those agencies that are independent consumer-controlled commissions.

Identify the Input provided by the state rehabilitation council, including recommendations from the councils annual report, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction, and other council reports. Be sure to also include:

- the Designated state unit's response to the input and recommendations; and
- explanations for the designated state unit's rejection of any input or recommendation of the council.

Attachment 4.2(c): Summary of Input and Recommendations of the State Rehabilitation Council; Responses of the Designated State Unit and Explanations for Rejection of Inputs or Recommendations

The following summarizes the State Rehabilitation Councils (SRC) input, recommendations and collaboration with Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation. The agency agrees with all the SRC recommendations and will take actions to implement these.

SRC Input

I. Throughout the year the SRC provided input around the agency goals for the 2009 State Plan. In late summer 2008, the SRC was provided information on the activities and strategies the 13 teams would be undertaking in 2009 to accomplish those goals.

II. Input was provided to VR on the development and results of four online consumer satisfaction

surveys. SRC made the original recommendation to assess satisfaction and to make recommendations for how to improve service delivery at each point in the process. VR consumers complete the surveys after the initial counseling session, during plan development, after the IPE is agreed to, and after the Job Search Strategy is developed. SRC continues to review results at each meeting and provide further input.

SRC Recommendations

- I. The SRC presented several Employer of the Year awards in the past year. SRC recommends this continue annually.
- II. The SRC held a luncheon for legislators last year to provide information about Vocational Rehabilitation. SRC hosted the second annual luncheon in February 2009. SRC recommends continuing this as an annual event. SRC views this as an excellent opportunity to provide information about the VR program to the legislators.
- III. The SRC recommends VR train a staff member to specialize in autism spectrum disorders to be a resource to staff statewide.
- IV. The SRC recommended and VR added a question to one of the consumer satisfaction surveys that asks if VR staff are promptly returning consumer phone calls/emails.
- V. The SRC recommends VR continue conducting consumer satisfaction surveys throughout the state.
- VI. The SRC recommends VR develop criteria for and present an Entrepreneur of the Year award for a consumer who has received self employment services.

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State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program

Nebraska Division of Rehabilitation Services - State Department of Education State Plan for Fiscal Year 2010 (submitted FY 2009)

Attachment 4.7(b)(3) Request for Waiver of Statewideness

Identify the types of services to be provided by the program for which the waiver of statewideness is requested.

The waiver request should also include:

- a written assurance from the local public agency that it will make available to the designated state unit the non-federal share of funds;
- a written assurance that designated state unit approval will be obtained for each proposed service before it is put into effect;
- a written assurance that all state plan requirements will apply to all services approved under the waiver.

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State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program

Nebraska Division of Rehabilitation Services - State Department of Education State Plan for Fiscal Year 2010 (submitted FY 2009)

Attachment 4.8(b)(1) Cooperative Agreements with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Workforce Investment System

Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce investment system with respect to

- Federal, state, and local agencies and programs;
- if applicable, Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the United States Department of Agriculture; and
- if applicable, state use contracting programs.

Attachment 4.8(b)(1): Cooperation with Agencies That Are Not in the Statewide Workforce Investment System and with Other Entities

Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation seeks to work cooperatively with numerous other state and local agencies and programs. Collaborative efforts are manifested through coordinated committees throughout the state with VR state office and local staff actively participating in the committees and community plans. Examples of the committees Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation serves on includes, but are not limited to, Nebraska Planning on Developmental Disabilities Council, State Advisory Council on Mental Health Services, Ticket to Work Infrastructure Committee, TBI Advisory Council, Local Community Resource Committees, Palliative Care Advisory Committee, Madonna Community Advisory Council, ATP Advisory Council, Veterans Administration Consumer Council, Alternative Finance Loan Advisory Council, local Chambers of Commerce, etc.

Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation maintains interagency agreements with NE Health and Human Services, Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, and the Veterans Administration Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program for purposes of providing an understanding and coordinated effort to achieve employment goals for persons with disabilities.

Written agreements are maintained with Liberty Centre Services Employment Program, Cirrus House, Inc., Central NE Goodwill, Community Alliance, Office of Juvenile Services, Douglas County Correctional Services, State Parole Office, Developmental Disabilities of Nebraska, Vital Services, Region V Services, Community Alternatives, Eastern NE Community Office of Retardation, Assistive Technology Partnership, Easter Seals Nebraska, Abilities Fund, and Black Hills Workshop. These written agreements coordinate efforts and services to assist persons with disabilities to achieve employment success. These agencies represent various locations throughout the state and serve individuals experiencing a variety of disabilities such as severe and persistent mental illness, developmental disability, brain injury, learning disability, and those experiencing multiple disabilities. To maximize limited resources and assist individuals to access other programs which can provide needed services essential to individuals achieving employment, Vocational Rehabilitation works cooperatively with and utilizes numerous services and facilities within the state. These services and facilities include Centers for Independent Living, the Parent Information and Training Center, Apprenticeship Program, schools, Educational Service Units and employers.

Vocational Rehabilitation works cooperatively with and utilizes Rural Economic Area Partnerships, and other programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the United States Department of Agriculture, when these programs and resources are available to local communities for economic development, and to the extent such cooperation and utilization is permissible under

§101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.
The State of Nebraska does not have a state use contracting program.

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State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program

**Nebraska Division of Rehabilitation Services - State Department of Education State Plan for Fiscal
Year 2010 (submitted FY 2009)**

Attachment 4.8(b)(2) Coordination with Education Officials

- Describe the designated state unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services, including provisions for the development and approval of an individualized plan for employment before each student determined to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services leaves the school setting or, if the designated state unit is operating on an order of selection, before each eligible student able to be served under the order leaves the school setting.
- Provide information on the formal interagency agreement with the state educational agency with respect to
 - consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including VR services;
 - transition planning by personnel of the designated state agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and completion of their individualized education programs;
 - roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining state lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services;
 - procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

Attachment 4.8(b)(2): Coordination with Education Officials

Coordination with Office of Special Populations, Nebraska Department of Education

Vocational Rehabilitation and the Nebraska Department of Education-Office of Special Populations co-fund a Transition Program Director, a Youth Leadership Facilitator, and the Youth Leadership Council. In addition, Vocational Rehabilitation and the Office of Special Populations have an interagency agreement to facilitate the transition of students who are receiving special education services from the provision of a free appropriate public education under the responsibility of an educational agency to the provision of vocational rehabilitation services under the responsibility of Vocational Rehabilitation. This agreement provides for

" Consultation and technical assistance to assist local educational agencies and Educational Service Units in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including employment, post-secondary education, vocational rehabilitation services, or services from an appropriate adult service agency.

" Transition planning by personnel of Vocational Rehabilitation and local school districts and Educational Service Units to facilitate the development and completion of individualized educational programs providing for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school

activities.

" Identification of local school districts roles and responsibilities for the provision of a free appropriate public education to students with disabilities to the point of exit from school, including the planning and provision of transition services, and Vocational Rehabilitations roles and responsibilities for providing consultation and technical assistance, upon request, to local school districts, and the provision of other assistance in planning for the transition of students with disabilities during their school years to the extent determined by cooperative agreements with local school districts.

" Identification of the local school district as the lead agency responsible for providing transition services and responsible qualified personnel to students with disabilities to the point of exit from school, and Vocational Rehabilitation as the lead agency responsible for providing services and qualified personnel after the point of exit to those students meeting Vocational Rehabilitation eligibility and order of selection requirements.

" Identification of the local school district as having the financial responsibility for providing transition services to students with disabilities to the point of exit from school, and Vocational Rehabilitation as the financial responsibility for providing services and qualified personnel after the point of exit to those students meeting Vocational Rehabilitation eligibility and order of selection requirements. Any student eligible for the VR program will have their Individualized Plan of Employment completed before exiting school. Other financial responsibilities, including joint responsibilities, may be specified in cooperative agreements between Vocational Rehabilitation and local school districts or Educational Service Units.

" Procedures for enhancing outreach to and identification of students with disabilities in need of transition services, including those students with disabilities who qualify for assistance under §504 of the Rehabilitation Act, but not a free appropriate public education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Vocational Rehabilitation serves on the Nebraska Department of Educations Special Education Advisory Councils Deaf and Hard of Hearing Standing Committee. This committee meets twice a year to share information, identify issues, and coordinate secondary education and transition services for deaf and hard of hearing students.

Coordination with local school districts and Educational Service Units

As a result of Nebraskas strong tradition of local control, over 250 local school districts offer secondary education. Most districts are small, enrolling fewer than 100 secondary students, and having less than 10 students with disabilities. Vocational Rehabilitation has a two prong directed outreach effort to secondary school districts

" Outreach and identification efforts directed to special education, vocational education, guidance counseling, school nursing, and school personnel having knowledge of students with disabilities, including those not receiving special education services.

" Development of a Transition Partnership Planning process for schools, Educational Service Units, and VR at the local level. This process, and the Planning Form, is used to promote a coordinated effort between the local school, ESU, and the local VR Office. The Planning Form identifies the nature and scope of services the local VR Office will provide in coordination with the efforts of the school and/or ESU. The process addresses the schedule of events and activities, expected outcomes, and a process to evaluate the effectiveness of the partnership on an annual basis.

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State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program

Nebraska Division of Rehabilitation Services - State Department of Education State Plan for Fiscal Year 2010 (submitted FY 2009)

Attachment 4.8(b)(3) Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations

Describe the manner in which the designated state agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit vocational rehabilitation service providers.

Attachment 4.8(b)(3): Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Vocational Rehabilitation Service Providers

Vocational Rehabilitation has written procedures for establishing written agreements with service providers, including private nonprofit vocational rehabilitation service providers. These procedures emphasize the role of local VR offices in identifying needs for specific vocational rehabilitation services responsive to the needs of persons with significant disabilities in their areas. They also emphasize the role of local VR and community rehabilitation staff in monitoring the agreements, including usage and effectiveness of services.

Background screening is required for all individual providers with written agreements who provide job coaching, independent living skills exploration and training, supported employment, and self-employment consultation. Providers who employ individuals who will provide services requiring background screening must provide written assurances that persons employed by them to provide direct services have not been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor involving neglect and/or abuse of a child or vulnerable adult before the written agreement is approved.

Currently, Vocational Rehabilitation does not have any formal Cooperative Agreements that utilize state and local dollars for matching federal funds.

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State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program

Nebraska Division of Rehabilitation Services - State Department of Education State Plan for Fiscal Year 2010 (submitted FY 2009)

Attachment 4.8(b)(4) Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services

Describe the efforts of the designated state agency to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other state agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide the following services to individuals with the most significant disabilities:

- supported employment services; and
- extended services.

Attachment 4.8(b)(4): Evidence of Collaboration Regarding Supported Employment Services and Extended Services

On the state level, Vocational Rehabilitation works collaboratively with the Health and Human Services Divisions of Developmental Disabilities Services and Behavioral Health Services to coordinate the system of service delivery for supported employment services. While the funding models for supported employment services in these two systems are different, both models contain

performance-based provisions.

At the local level, Vocational Rehabilitation enters into written agreements for the provision of supported employment services with financial assistance provided by Vocational Rehabilitation. These agreements are used with public or private non-profit community rehabilitation programs and private for-profit entities providing supported employment services. Vocational Rehabilitation maintains written procedures for entering into these agreements.

Each agreement describes the time-limited services that will be provided to eligible persons with the most significant disabilities using funds from Vocational Rehabilitation prior to the transition to extended services. These services may include any of those described in Attachment 6.3.

Cooperating organizations must assure the availability of the minimum extended services of (1) twice monthly monitoring at the work site of each individual to assess job stability and (2) based on that assessment, coordination or provision of specific services needed to maintain job stability. If off-site monitoring is determined to be appropriate, then each month, there must be two contacts with the employed person and, if the person has disclosed their impairment to their employer, one contact with the employer each month. These mandatory extended monitoring services apply to all agreements.

This screen was last updated on Jun 15 2009 4:08PM by Cinda Wacker

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State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program

Nebraska Division of Rehabilitation Services - State Department of Education State Plan for Fiscal Year 2010 (submitted FY 2009)

Attachment 4.10 Comprehensive System of Personnel Development

Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development

1. Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:
 - the number of personnel who are employed by the state agency in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;
 - the number of personnel currently needed by the state agency to provide vocational rehabilitation services, broken down by personnel category; and
 - projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the state agency to provide vocational rehabilitation services in the state in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

Attachment 4.10 Comprehensive System of Personnel Development

This attachment describes the comprehensive system of personnel development. The State Rehabilitation Council has had an opportunity to review and comment on the development of plans, policies, and procedures necessary to meet the requirements of 34 CFR 361.18(b), (c), (d), and (f).

Data systems on personnel and personnel development

Vocational Rehabilitation maintains a system for collecting and analyzing data on qualified personnel needs which includes: the number of personnel currently employed by Vocational Rehabilitation, by personnel category; the number of positions currently available to Vocational Rehabilitation, by personnel category; and projections of the number of personnel who will be needed in 5 years, by personnel category. The table summarizes this information for direct service personnel as of March 15, 2009:

Job Title	Projected vacancies over the next 5 years		
Rehabilitation Specialists	64	0	29
Service Specialists	49	3	31
Associates	40	0	15
Senior Administrators	3	0	1
Program Directors Specialists & Associates	17	0	5
Information Technology	7	0	0
Area Administrators & Office Directors	13	0	3
Office Associates	2	0	0

2.

Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:

- a list of the institutions of higher education in the state that are preparing vocational rehabilitation professionals, by type of program;
- the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and
- the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

There are no institutions of higher education in Nebraska receiving funds under Title III of the Rehabilitation Act to prepare vocational rehabilitation professionals in the disciplines designated in the Act (29 USC 771(b)(1)(B)). Consequently, there is no personnel development data system.

Institutions	Students enrolled	Employees sponsored by agency and/or RSA	Graduates sponsored by agency and/or RSA	Graduates from the previous year

Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel

Describe the development (updated on an annual basis) and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the Coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated state unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

Plan for recruitment, preparation, and retention of qualified personnel

There is a projected need to replace an average of 15 VR service delivery staff annually due to resignations and retirements over the next 5 years. We anticipate no new hires through growth.

Recruitment

The ability of Vocational Rehabilitation to recruit qualified specialists is grossly impaired by the absence of (1) a federal traineeship support for a long term rehabilitation training program in Nebraska, (2) the lack of an active state chapter of the National Rehabilitation Association or any of its divisions, and (3) the totally inadequate regional supply of qualified applicants with an obligation to the public vocational rehabilitation program.

Qualified rehabilitation and service specialists (i.e., those who meet academic degree standards) will be actively recruited from Nebraska higher education institutions listed above as well as the following rehabilitation education programs located primarily in the Midwest. The agency supplements the distribution of Rehabilitation and Service Specialists vacancy posting by the states Personnel Office by sending announcements directly to the following counseling programs.

In Nebraska, there are two programs accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). They are, the University of Nebraska at Kearney and the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Both programs offer an M.A. in Community Counseling.

University of Nebraska at Kearney

Students Enrolled Last Year: 82

Graduates Last Year: 10

University of Nebraska at Omaha

Students Enrolled Last Year: 113

Graduates Last Year: 31

There are 6 institutions of higher education, accredited by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools that offer an M.A. in Counseling, Clinical Counseling, or Community Counseling.

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Students Enrolled Last Year: Not reported
Graduates Last Year: Not reported
Creighton
Students Enrolled Last Year: Not reported
Graduates Last Year: Not reported
Bellevue University
Students Enrolled Last Year: 136
Graduates Last Year: 2
Chadron State College
Students Enrolled Last Year: 75
Graduates Last Year: 16
Doane College
Students Enrolled Last Year: 216
Graduates Last Year: 34
Wayne State College
Students Enrolled Last Year: 38
Graduates Last Year: 11

These are the rehabilitation education programs that the agency sends specialist vacancy announcements.

Master's Rehabilitation Programs

Drake University
East Central University
Emporia State University
Langston University
Maryville University of St. Louis
Minnesota State University, Mankato
St. Cloud State University
The University of Iowa
University of Northern Colorado

Undergraduate Rehabilitation Programs

East Central University
Emporia State University
Illinois Institute of Technology
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
University of Illinois Urbana
University of North Dakota
University of Wisconsin Stout

Recruitment of Personnel from Minority Backgrounds and Individuals with Disabilities

There will be active recruitment of qualified personnel with disabilities and those from racial and ethnic minority. Current employees from a minority background and employees with disabilities often recruit from their networks. Our vacancy posting are listed with the Mexican-American Commission, the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska, the Urban League of Nebraska, the State Independent Living Council, the five Nebraska Centers for Independent Living and the CIL in Council Bluffs, Iowa. In addition, an increased salary differential is offered to individuals who are bilingual or fluent in American Sign Language (ASL).

Preparation

New Vocational Rehabilitation staff receive intensive structured training in basic vocational rehabilitation values, principles, and practices during their initial probationary period.

Participation is funded in part through the In-Service Training Grant.

Retention

All staff will be afforded the opportunity for 20 contact hours annually of continuing education in vocational rehabilitation knowledge, skills, and abilities to enhance job performance and improve job retention. This conforms to the annual contact hour

requirement for the states highest applicable standard. Participation is funded in part through the In-Service Training Grant.

The Director and Assistant Director conduct video conversations with new staff during their first month, fourth month, eighth month and thirteenth month on the job. The video conversations are an opportunity to

- " become acquainted with each new staff member and his/her background,
- " provide an opportunity for a new staff member to ask questions and provide feedback,
- " assess how new staff member is progressing in his/her training,
- " determine if a new staff member is finding his/her job to be what they expected and consistent with how the job was presented, and
- " demonstrate the agency's interest in his/her success.

The Director, Assistant Director and VR HR conduct face-to-face, one-on-one interviews with every staff member once a year. This is an opportunity for all staff to provide personal feedback on specific policies and procedures and to discuss their role on their team and in the agency.

The Assistant Director and the Program Director for VR HR conduct exit interviews with all staff leaving the agency. The goal of the interviews is to assess why people leave, look for trends, and to learn if there was anything the agency could have done to retain them.

Personnel Standards

Describe the state agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards to ensure that designated state unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:

1. standards that are consistent with any national or state-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or, in the absence of these requirements, other comparable requirements (including state personnel requirements) that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing vocational rehabilitation services; and
2. to the extent that existing standards are not based on the highest requirements in the state applicable to a particular profession or discipline, the steps the state is currently taking and the steps the State Plans to take in accordance with the written plan to retrain or hire personnel within the designated state unit to meet standards that are based on the highest requirements in the state, including measures to notify designated state unit personnel, institutions of higher education, and other public agencies of these steps and the timelines for taking each step.

Be sure to include the following:

- specific strategies for retraining, recruiting, and hiring personnel;
- the specific time period by which all state unit personnel will meet the standards;
- procedures for evaluating the designated state unit's progress in hiring or retraining personnel to meet applicable personnel standards within the established time period;
- the identification of initial minimum qualifications that the designated state unit will require of newly hired personnel when the state unit is unable to hire new personnel who meet the established personnel standards;
- the identification of a plan for training newly hired personnel who do not meet the established standards to meet the applicable standards within the time period established for all state unit personnel to meet the established personnel standards.

Personnel standards

Vocational Rehabilitation employs staff in 13 self-directed teams throughout the state to provide direct services and supports (including financial assistance to help pay for the cost of services) responsive to the unique needs and circumstances of each person with significant disabilities served. During FY 2003, Vocational Rehabilitation implemented the new "Service Specialist" personnel classification. This position was created as the result of a Nebraska Department of Education position classification study based on job analyses of current job incumbents. The study contractors found that the direct service work performed by Vocational Rehabilitation staff fell into 3 distinct classes of personnel, and recommended that Vocational Rehabilitation create a third position, intermediate between associates and rehabilitation specialists and made of some duties currently performed by them.

Associate position

Associates provide direct support to teams serving persons with disabilities seeking employment. Their responsibilities include: monitoring persons with disabilities engaged in agreed on vocational rehabilitation plans; arranging and coordinating team activities; arranging and coordinating transportation; maintaining individual service records; and arranging financial assistance necessary to obtain agreed on goods and services from community providers.

Associate academic degree standards

There are no national or state-approved or state-recognized standards applicable to the associate position. The highest entry-level academic degree required for comparable work in State personnel requirements is the high school diploma. All currently employed associates meet or exceed this standard.

Service specialist position

Service specialists provide direct support to persons with disabilities seeking employment. Much of their work involves providing services to groups of consumers. Their responsibilities include: conducting orientation to Social Security benefits analyses; providing personal management training, social skills training, job placement assistance, job seeking skills training and other instruction of persons with disabilities using standardized curricula and instructional methods; and providing information about the purpose, nature, and scope of vocational rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities, service providers, and the general public.

Service specialist academic degree standards

There are no national or state-approved or state-recognized standards applicable to the service specialist. The highest entry-level academic degree required for comparable work in State personnel requirements is the baccalaureate degree. All currently employed service specialists meet this standard.

Rehabilitation specialist position

Rehabilitation specialists make determinations and provide specialized direct services to persons with disabilities pursuing employment goals. Their responsibilities include: eligibility, IPE and amendment approval, IPE progress, and employment outcome determinations; community assessment; career counseling, disability awareness counseling, personal adjustment counseling, rehabilitation engineering, independent living skill training, personal management training, social skills training, job placement assistance, and job retention assistance. These activities generally require independent complex decision-making and problem solving based on extensive knowledge of disability, human behavior, the world of work, and the community.

Rehabilitation specialist academic degree standards

The highest entry level academic degree standard in Nebraska applicable to the discipline of rehabilitation counseling is a masters degree in counseling or a closely related field. This degree is required for certification as a Professional Counselor under Nebraskas Uniform Credentials Act (Neb. Rev. Stat. §38-2132). Other state agencies typically require the bachelors degree for work comparable to that of specialists. In 1983, after 2 years of use as an informal standard, we formally incorporated the masters in counseling or a closely related field academic degree standard into the Nebraska Department of Education personnel system hiring requirements for rehabilitation specialists. Thus, Vocational Rehabilitations hiring standard exceeds that of other state agencies and equals the highest standard in the state. For 27 years, all specialists hired by Vocational Rehabilitation have

possessed the masters degree in counseling or a closely related field.

Need for retraining plan

Since the personnel standards have equaled or exceeded the highest applicable standards in Nebraska for 27 years, no steps are necessary to change hiring standards or retrain personnel to meet the existing standard.

Staff Development

Describe the state agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that all personnel employed by the designated state unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

1. a system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated state unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology; and
2. procedures for the acquisition and dissemination to designated state unit professionals and paraprofessionals significant knowledge from research and other sources.

Personnel development

Each team assesses the current knowledge, skill, and ability of the team and its members, and identifies the personnel development activities necessary to enable the team and its members to achieve their strategic and performance goals. These team level assessments are analyzed and integrated with statewide training needs identified by specialty area Program Directors, training needed to implement planned innovation and expansion activities, and needs indicated by objective program performance measures. The following summarizes significant staff development needs identified from these assessments. Analysis of the assessments indicates the need for a long-term staff development strategy. In the absence of a long-term strategy, staff development is a series of one-time responses to immediate needs. The impact of this training on organizational functioning deteriorates over time as a result of turnover. For example, even though 100% of staff can be trained at one point in time, with normal turnover, only about 50% of the trained staff will remain 5 years later. Also, in the absence of a long-term strategy identifying the staff development needs of teams and types of specialized knowledges, staff development focuses on individuals and does not respond to the knowledge and performance needs of teams and the organization as a whole. As a result of these problems, there are persistent gaps in critical staff knowledge and skill. A long term staff development strategy is needed to ensure the ongoing renewal and updating of the entire organizational knowledge and skill base to ensure the organization, its teams, and its staff promptly incorporate into practice new knowledge or responses to emerging needs in the consumer population, service delivery processes, or specific team services.

For staff development purposes, the organizational knowledge and skill base is made up of the three major domains and sub-domains shown in Table 1. The Disabilities and Service Delivery Processes domains are critical organizational knowledges and skills, shared by all team members. To effectively communicate among themselves, team members must possess knowledge of consumer disabilities and the way in which these impact upon the consumer, employment, and the provision of services. Every team member must possess knowledge of the organizations service delivery processes and their role and responsibilities in connection with these processes. Consequently, Disabilities and Service Delivery Processes knowledge is team based, possessed by all members of each team. Finally, each team member must possess the knowledge and skill to provide the specific services for which they are responsible. This knowledge is position based, possessed by all staff responsible for providing each service.

Table 1. Organizational Knowledge and Skill Domains and Sub-domains
Disabilities (Team based)

Musculoskeletal
Central nervous system
Spinal cord disorders
Psychoses
Anxiety & personality disorders
Cognitive disabilities
Endocrine & immune system disorders
Circulatory & respiratory
Autism Spectrum Disorders
Amputations
Hearing impairments
Acquired Brain Injury
Learning Disabilities

Service Delivery Processes (Team based)

Induction
Goal planning
Work-first (place & train)
Employment preparation (train & place)
Transition into work
Job maintenance & career advancement
Partnerships
Support processes

Team Services (Position based)

Assessment
Counseling
Placement
Rehabilitation technology
Independent living
Transition

Personnel development needs

1. New staff training. There is a need for Vocational Rehabilitation to replace an average of 14 staff annually due to resignations and retirements over the next 3 years. No new hires through growth are anticipated. Nebraska does not have a CORE accredited, RSA assisted, graduate level rehabilitation education program preparing persons for practice in a rehabilitation discipline, while in-migration of qualified personnel to fill vacant positions averages only about 1 per year. Consequently, newly hired specialists, as well as all associates, must be provided with intensive initial post-hire training to assure they possess critical performance related vocational rehabilitation knowledge and skills.
2. Training in functional aspects of physical and mental impairments. There is a need for on-going training of teams in the functional aspects of physical and mental impairments. Past disability related training has been uneven in frequency and staff coverage, with the result that teams lack the consistent knowledge base necessary for the effective planning and delivery of services. The nature and scope of this training will be described in more detail in the next section. Disorders of the musculoskeletal and nervous systems should be the initial focus of training, since they cause about 66% of all significant work disability and we anticipate the numbers of persons disabled by these disorders seeking our services will increase with implementation of the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act.
3. Training in service delivery processes. There is a need for on-going training of teams in our core service delivery processes. We continually refine many core processes to better achieve our Quality Employment Solutions goal. Teams require intensive training and continuing follow-up to implement these changed processes, methods, and procedures. Since service delivery processes are influenced by legislation and current research, service delivery process training incorporates relevant requirements of the 1998 Rehabilitation Act Amendments (including informed choice, use of rehabilitation technology, and servicing

culturally diverse populations), as well as evidence based processes and practices identified in current research, and relevant portions of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.

4. Training in team services. There is a need for on going training to enhance the ability of VR rehabilitation specialists, service specialists, and associates to provide direct services and supports. Specific types of team services provided directly by our staff include: community assessment; career counseling, disability awareness counseling, personal adjustment counseling, rehabilitation engineering (including assistive technology), independent living skill training, personal management training, social skills training, job placement assistance, and job retention assistance. Also included are: Social Security benefits analyses; job seeking skills training and other instruction of persons with disabilities; monitoring persons with disabilities engaged in agreed on rehabilitation plans; providing information; arranging, coordinating, and scheduling team activities; arranging, coordinating, scheduling, and providing transportation; developing, preparing, and maintaining individual service records; and arranging financial assistance to procure agreed on goods and services. Staff responsible for providing specific services and supports need continuing training to maintain their competence, and to acquire the knowledge and skill needed to implement new best practices and procedures.

5. Individual training. Training needs assessments show a broad and diverse range of training needs related to individual development and performance improvement. These individual needs include leadership development and capacity building.

System of personnel development

The comprehensive personnel development system ensures that all personnel receive appropriate and adequate training related to their ability to provide vocational rehabilitation services leading to quality employment outcomes for persons with significant disabilities. This system is based on our needs assessments and is made up of

1. New staff training to an estimated 14 new staff annually. This responds to the identified need to develop fundamental vocational rehabilitation knowledge and skill related to job performance in newly hired staff.

New employee training classes included the following.

- " VR Process (3 days)
- " QUEST Case Management System (3 days)
- " New Employee Orientation (2 days)
- " Medical Aspects I (2 days)
- " Medical Aspects II (2 days)
- " Job Planning (2 days)
- " Employment & Job Planning Discussion (2 days)
- " Communication Training (1 day)
- " World of Work-DOL (1 day)
- " Nebraska Career Information System (1 day)

2. Workshops, distance learning, podcasts, and continuing education activities for Vocational Rehabilitation teams and staff in the areas of functional aspects of disability, service delivery process, and team services. This responds to the identified needs for in-service training in these areas. It also provides opportunities for staff certified under Nebraskas Uniform Licensing Act to obtain continuing education contact hours for certification maintenance. (see Neb. Rev. Stat. §71-1,269).

3. Workshops, distance learning, podcasts, and continuing education activities for individual Vocational Rehabilitation staff in identified areas of individual development and performance improvement. This responds to individual needs, as well as organizational needs of succession planning, leadership development, and capacity building.

Current podcasts available for team and individual training include the following.

- " Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital Training
 - o Multiple Sclerosis and Employment Considerations
 - o Work Considerations for the Adult with Cerebral Palsy
 - o Vocational Considerations for the Client with an Amputation
 - o Vocational Rehabilitation and Spinal Cord Injury
- " Agency Statewide Training Conference
 - o Making a Return on Investment Pay Off by Matching People and Personalities in the

Workplace

- o Mild Traumatic Brain Injury in Returning Combat Veterans and Accessing VA Benefits

- o An Overview of Substance Use, Disorders, Screening and Treatment

- o The Milestones of Adjustment Post-Psychosis (MAPPS) Model

- " Brain Book

- o Scenarios

- o Webinar

- " Agency Core Services

- o Transition

- o Placement

4. Acquisition and dissemination of significant knowledge from research and other sources.

These activities ensure that staff have access to new knowledge and learning in the field of vocational rehabilitation.

The system of staff development must provide for the ongoing renewal and updating of the entire organizational knowledge and skill base, requiring a long term training schedule.

Coordination with the in-service training grant

In-service training grant funds are used to support, in part, the costs of instructional materials, training consultant expenses, and the lodging and per diem expenses of trainees.

Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs

Describe how the designated state unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability or in appropriate modes of communication with applicants or eligible individuals.

Communication with diverse populations

Vocational Rehabilitation, to the maximum extent possible, recruits and hires qualified personnel who are able to communicate in the native languages of applicants and recipients with limited English speaking ability. An increased salary differential is offered to individuals who are bilingual or fluent in ASL. Interpreter services for persons with limited English speaking ability are obtained from agencies, vendors, ethnic organizations and advocacy groups, or individuals (family members, friends, coworkers, volunteers). The AT&T Language Line is used as a backup service for walk-ins or crisis situations where no interpreter is available and there is an immediate need to communicate with person with limited English speaking ability. Vocational Rehabilitation employs staff with sign language skills in areas with significant concentrations of persons with hearing impairments who communicate in sign language, and obtains interpreter services for the hearing impaired from persons meeting the Nebraska Department of Education's written interpreter qualification standards and policies in other areas. These standards now require the department and agency to use interpreters licensed by the State of Nebraska.

Coordination of Personnel Development Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act

Describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated state unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act.

Coordination of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Vocational Rehabilitation coordinates with the Comprehensive System of Personnel

Development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) by: (1) exchanging needs assessment findings in areas or topics of mutual concern, (2) exchanging schedules of training and personnel development activities, and (3) joint development of training programs of mutual concern and priority, and joint funding of trainer costs for conducting joint training, when appropriate.

This screen was last updated on Aug 10 2009 4:24PM by Cinda Wacker

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State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program

Nebraska Division of Rehabilitation Services - State Department of Education State Plan for Fiscal Year 2010 (submitted FY 2009)

Attachment 4.11(a) Statewide Assessment

Provide an assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the state, particularly the vocational rehabilitation services needs of:

- individuals with most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;
- individuals with disabilities who are minorities;
- individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program; and
- individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system.

Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the state.

Attachment 4.11(a): Results of Comprehensive Statewide Assessment of the Rehabilitation Needs of Individuals with Disabilities and Need to Establish, Develop, or Improve Community Rehabilitation Programs

The Comprehensive Statewide Assessment was conducted between January 1, 2007 and January 31, 2009. During this period, the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) held 9 meetings. To facilitate the Council's role in partnering with the agency in developing, agreeing to, and reviewing the agency's goals and priorities, evaluating the effectiveness of the program, and assisting in the preparation of the State Plan, the SRC, at each of its meetings, was apprised of and provided input on the agency's activities, most recent performance data, consumer satisfaction survey results, consumer issues addressed by the Client Assistance Program, assessment data results, and partnership updates including presentations by some of the partners. The SRC and its working committees made recommendations on the State's Goals and Priorities with respect to increasing the quality and timeliness of services, improving consumer satisfaction and engagement, and developing effective community partnerships to increase long term and independent living supports.

The data sources used in this assessment included the following:

2006 and 2007 Disability Status Report Nebraska Cornell University
2006 and 2007 RSA-MIS Databases and Reports
2006 Social Security Data

US Census Bureau-Nebraska Profile and Demographics
American Community Survey, 2007
VR Consumer Surveys
VR Staff Surveys
VR Exit Interviews

Partnership sources used in this assessment included the following:

Nebraska Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities
TBI Council
Nebraska Medicaid Infrastructure Grant
State Advisory Committee on Mental Health Services
Deaf and Hard of Hearing: Special Education Advisory Council Standing Committee
Assistive Technology Partnership
Palliative Care
Workforce Investment Boards
Client Assistance Program

Public comment sources used in this assessment included the following:

Public Hearing 2008 State Plan
Public Hearing 2009 State Plan
Public Hearing Rule 72

Adults with significant work disabilities

While 123,958, or 10.7% of the 1,126,891 civilian, non-institutionalized, population ages 16-64 are estimated as having a disability, 68,740, or 6.1% are estimated to have an employment limitation as reported in the Current Population Survey of 2007. The definition of employment limitation for this survey are those individuals who reported having a physical, mental, or emotional condition lasting 6 months or more that made it difficult working at a job or business.(1)
Approximately 55,707 Nebraskans receive Social Security and/or Supplemental Security Income disability payments. (3)

Another source indicates that 116,000 of the non-institutionalized individuals, ages 16 64, reported one or more disabilities. The highest prevalence rate was physical disabilities, followed by mental disabilities, and sensory disabilities. (2) The individuals most in need of supported employment services are individuals with significant mental retardation, severe and persistent mental illness, and traumatic brain injury.

Disability rates among the racial and ethnic minority population in Nebraska varies by race/ethnicity. For all racial and ethnic minorities, only Asian had a lower percentage of individuals with a disability than the percentage among whites. (2)

Percent of non-institutionalized working age Native Other Multiple population 2007 Asian Black American White Race
With a disability 4.2% 20.9% 24.7% 10.4% 12.1%
Without a disability 95.8% 79.1% 75.3% 89.6% 87.9%

The poverty rate among working age people with disabilities in Nebraska in 2007 was 22.4 % compared to individuals with no disability with a poverty rate of 7.6 %. Individuals with a Mental Disability have the highest poverty rate (33.4%). Individuals with a Sensory Disability had the lowest poverty rate (17.9%). The average median household income among men and women without a work limitation in Nebraska was \$55,900 while the average median household income among men and women with a work limitation was \$37,800. (2)

Students with disabilities

3,555 students with disabilities, ages 14-21, exited Nebraska secondary schools in 2006-2007. The three disabling conditions that accounted for 77% of the disabling conditions among Nebraska secondary students exiting were learning disabilities (48%), mental retardation (16%) and other health impaired (13%). (4)

2006 Exit Data for Students with a Disability(4)

Category Number Percentage

Graduated with regular high school diploma 1,849 52.01%

Received a certificate 23 0.65%

Reached maximum age 90 2.53%

Transferred to regular education 668 18.79%

Died 13 0.37%

Moved, known to be continuing 381 10.72%

Dropped out 531 14.94%

Total Exits 3,555 100.00%

Age at Confirmed Dropout(4)

Age Number

14 0

15 35

16 115

17 139

18 152

19 62

20 0

21 0

Among the confirmed dropouts, 50% were students with a learning disability and 18% were students with an emotional disability. (4)

(1) American Community Survey, 2007 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, S1801 - Disability Characteristic-Nebraska

(2) Erickson, W., & Lee, C. (2008). 2007 Disability Status Report: Nebraska. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability Demographics and Statistics (StatsRRTC).

(3) Social Security Administration Annual Statistical Supplement, 2008 (released February 2006).

(4) Data Accountability Center-IDEA Data, IDEA Part B Exiting 2006-2007, Table 4-1
https://www.ideadata.org/arc_toc9.asp#partbEX

----- Career opportunities for persons with significant disabilities

Nebraska's average unemployment rate for 2008 was 3.4% compared to the average national unemployment rate of 5.8%. It is difficult to predict what the Nebraska economic climate will be in 2010-2012 given the looming national and international economic crisis.

Nebraska Department of Workforce Development, Labor Market Information, Occupational and Industry Projections, Long Term Projections through 2016 indicate that Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations will be the number one fastest growing occupations percentage wise with Healthcare Support Occupations coming in second. Number wise, the occupations that will add the largest number of jobs are as follows.

" Truck Drivers, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer

" Registered Nurses

" Nursing Aides, Orderlies, and Attendants

" Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, including Fast Food

- " Waiters and Waitresses
- " Child Care Workers
- " Customer Service Representatives.
- " Bookkeeping, Accountants, and Audit Clerks
- " General Office Clerks

Nebraska has seven economic regions. This report further states that the Omaha Consortium and the Lincoln MSA will have the largest number of jobs due to growth and replacement which is consistent with the distribution of population within the state.

The most recent Nebraska wage data is from the second quarter of 2006. Average entry-level wages ranged from \$19.34 hourly for management occupations to \$6.13 hourly for food preparation and service-related occupations. The average wage for part-time vacancies is \$9.27 per hour and the average wage for full-time vacancies is \$13.75 hourly. Over two-thirds of Nebraska employers offer health insurance to their full-time employees.

The 2007 Nebraska Employees Benefit Report (survey conducted in 2006) indicates that 68.8% of the jobs statewide were full-time and 31.2% were part-time. (Note: The 2006 survey did not provide any criteria to differentiate between full-time and part-time employment.) 65.8% of Nebraska businesses offer medical Insurance to full-time employees and 11% offer medical insurance to part-time employees. The leading industries to offer medical insurance were Information and Manufacturing at 84.9% and 80.9% respectively.

The Nebraska Workforce Development 4th quarter 2007 Job Vacancy Report states that 35.6% of vacancies required no education, 33.1% required a high school diploma or GED, 9.7% required vocational education, 4.8% a two-year degree and 16.9% a four-year degree or beyond. However in 2006, 64.5% of high school graduates went directly to college.

Although the statewide picture is more positive than the national picture, local labor markets vary considerably. Layoffs and closing in smaller rural labor markets off the I-80 corridor have a much greater economic and social impact than in the larger urban labor markets. However, layoffs and closing in any of the seven economic areas of the state will constrain individual choice as well as the possibilities for successful rehabilitation if the individual is not willing and able to relocate.

Vocational rehabilitation service needs

Persons with the most significant disabilities

Persons with the most significant disabilities receive priority for services under the Vocational Rehabilitation order of selection (see Attachment 4.11(c)(3)). Major service needs include

"Learning about, accessing, and coordinating needed community services and supports. Persons with the most significant work disabilities have complex needs, complicated by poverty and lack of social support networks. They must seek out and coordinate services and supports from a number of different community agencies, organizations, and programs in an attempt to meet their needs. Income maintenance needed for the relief of poverty is not always available, leading to rehabilitation failures resulting from minor economic crises. Independence and community functioning are not always available from other agencies, leading to abuse of the VR program by those seeking rehabilitation services, not employment. Further, because of the intertwining of cash benefits with services and supports, some persons with the most severe disabilities will be harmed if they achieve high quality employment, a situation which will persist until Nebraska adopts and fully funds the work incentives contained in the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act.

"Transition services targeted to students with specific learning disabilities and behavior disorders. Recent data analyses show there is a population of transition students with primary disabilities of specific learning disability and behavioral disorder who have dropped out of school which is increasingly encountered within the Juvenile Justice system. The ultimate fate of this population without intervention is well known. Consequently, an active, employment focused intervention program conducted in cooperation with the Juvenile Justice System continues to be expanded to provide for meaningful intervention.

"Services targeted to individuals with brain injury and autism spectrum disorders. The traditional services have not been adequate to meet the needs of these populations. In addition there continues to be a lack of long-term community supports. During 2008 almost one-fourth of all Vocational Rehabilitation applicants completing the HELPS brain injury screening tool had positive indicators. This has implications for the type of services and training that are necessary for effective service delivery.

"Career assessment, counseling, and planning services targeted to achieving high quality employment outcomes. Traditional career assessment, counseling, and planning services are disconnected from labor market realities, particularly those associated with constrained rural labor markets. Traditional services are marginally effective for those with cognitive impairments affecting reasoning and judgment. Evidence based, experientially oriented, assessment, counseling, and planning services should be available, particularly in rural areas, to meet needs.

"Skill training and behavior management services provided in integrated competitive employment and community settings. Traditional classroom and segregated training programs are marginally effective with persons with cognitive impairments affecting learning and transfer of skill. Evidence-based training and behavior management services provided in relevant community employment and living sites should be made available to meet needs.

"Personalized vocational rehabilitation services responsive to unique individual needs and person-environment interactions. The complexity of service needs among persons with the most significant work disabilities is complicated by their unique one of a kind nature. Traditional services based on programs and slots are marginally effective. Flexible services and supports provided to individuals in their natural environments should be made available to meet needs.

"Rehabilitation technology services to accommodate functional limitations. Rapid advances in technology require continual monitoring to be aware of and knowledgeable of their potential application through rehabilitation engineering to accommodate individuals within work and living environments. The identification of solutions through a technology transfer approach provides individuals with significant disabilities expanded opportunities for employment. In addition, greater attention by employers to issues such as ergonomics and the aging workforce has led to an increased demand for assistive devices to improve the functional capabilities of individuals and prevent secondary disabilities in the workplace.

"Equitable access to extended supports for supported employment. During FY 2007, supported employment outcomes accounted for 15.62% of the persons rehabilitated exceeding the national percentage for general and combined agencies of 9.99%. This is the fourth year that Nebraska's percentage and number of supported employment outcomes have increased. Extended supports are still not available for persons whose most significant disabilities result from conditions other than developmental disabilities and severe and persistent mental illness, nor are they available for persons with developmental disabilities under age 21, limiting access to supported employment outcomes for persons whose most significant disabilities result from other physical and mental impairments. This is a problem Vocational Rehabilitation cannot resolve alone.

"Transportation for employment and independence. Lack of transportation limits the opportunities for employment and independence among persons with significant work disabilities. This is a community problem that must be addressed at the community level since it also affects the low income and aged populations.

Needs of minority and underserved populations

Based on experience from past initiatives to extend services to previously underserved groups and persons from ethnic and racial minority backgrounds, their needs are best met through long-term, balanced outreach efforts built on continuing partnerships with relevant consumer and support groups. This maintains service equity by preventing an unbalancing of the agency workload while, at the same time, providing a basis for cooperative refinement of services and supports to meet consumer needs.

Needs of persons with disabilities served by other workforce investment system components

Persons with disabilities served by other components of the Nebraska workforce investment system are primarily those whose disabilities either do not substantially impede their employment or do not seriously limit one or more functional capacities in terms of an employment outcome. The employment needs of these individuals generally can be met by the services and supports available from other components of the Nebraska workforce investment system. Vocational Rehabilitation provides information and referral services to assure these individuals link up with the appropriate

component of the workforce investment system.

Need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs

The need is for evidence-based, flexible vocational skill training, behavior management, and rehabilitation technology services and supports to be provided in natural environments, including integrated competitive employment sites. There also is a need for expanded, predictable, and stable funding of extended services and supports adequate to maintain persons with the most significant disabilities in supported employment.

This screen was last updated on Aug 7 2009 4:45PM by Cinda Wacker

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State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program

Nebraska Division of Rehabilitation Services - State Department of Education State Plan for Fiscal Year 2010 (submitted FY 2009)

Attachment 4.11(b) Annual Estimates

- Identify the number of individuals in the state who are eligible for services.
- Identify the number of eligible individuals who will receive services provided with funds under:
 - Part B of Title I;
 - Part B of Title VI;
 - each priority category, if under an order of selection.
- Identify the cost of services for the number of individuals estimated to be eligible for services. If under an order of selection, identify the cost of services for each priority category.

Attachment 4.11(b): Annual Estimates of Individuals to Be Served
and Costs of Services

Attachment 4.11(b): Annual Estimates of Individuals to Be Served

1. Estimates of the number of individuals who are potentially eligible for services.

The table shows the number of potentially eligible persons in Nebraska aged 16 to 64 by priority group category*.

Priority 1 Most Significant 19,488

Priority 2 Significant 30,482

Priority 3 Not Significant 66,030

Total 116,000

* This table total is based on the 2007 Disability Status Report for Nebraska by Cornell University, population 16 to 64 reporting a disability.

2. Estimates of the number of individuals who will receive services and their costs.

a. Number of eligible individuals who will receive services with funds provided by Title I, Part B during FY 2010 and their estimated costs, by priority category in the Order of Selection*

Recipient Priority Served Cost**

Priority category 1 2,204 \$7,010,147

Priority category 2 3,597 \$10,964,590

Priority category 3 0 \$0

Total 5,801 \$17,974,737

* This table assumes no significant changes in current referral patterns, service mix, or costs of services. It is based on an analysis of consumer data between October 1, 2007 and February 28, 2009.

** Does not include costs of assessment services to determine eligibility and OOS priority.

b. Number of eligible individuals who will receive services with funds provided by Title VI, Part B during FY 2010 and their estimated costs, by priority category in the Order of Selection*

Recipient Priority Served Cost**

Priority category 1 165 \$270,000

Priority category 2 0 0

Priority category 3 0 0

Total 165 \$270,000

* This table assumes no significant changes in current referral patterns, service mix, or cost of supported employment services.

** Includes costs of supplementary assessment services

Category	Title I or Title VI Funds	Estimated Number to be Served	Average Cost of Services
			—
			—
			—
			—
			—
			—
			—
			—
			—
			—
			—
Totals	\$0	0	—

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State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program

**Nebraska Division of Rehabilitation Services - State Department of Education State Plan for Fiscal
Year 2010 (submitted FY 2009)**

Attachment 4.11(c)(1) State Goals and Priorities

The goals and priorities are based on the comprehensive statewide assessment, on requirements related to the performance standards and indicators, and on other information about the state agency. (See section 101(a)(15)(C) of the Act.) This attachment should be updated when there are material changes in the information that require the description to be amended.

- Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the state VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the state has a council.
- Identify if the state VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the state has such a council, jointly reviewed the goals and priorities and jointly agreed to any revisions.
- Identify the goals and priorities in carrying out the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs.
- Ensure that the goals and priorities are based on an analysis of the following areas:
 - the most recent comprehensive statewide assessment, including any updates;
 - the performance of the state on standards and indicators; and
 - other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the State Rehabilitation Council and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107.

Attachment 4.11(c)(1): States Goals and Priorities

Data sources utilized in the Comprehensive Statewide Assessment, such as VR Staff Surveys, Partnership Sources, and public comments were instrumental in the goal realignment process used in the development of the States Goals and Priorities. Specifically, VR Staff Surveys were instrumental in identifying potential uses of mobile technology to enhance the quality and timeliness of services. Partnership Sources, in particular the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant and Client Assistance Program, helped identify the need for the agency to have a better understanding of the impact of poverty and the lack of supports on the ability of individuals with disabilities to be ready for, obtain, and retain employment. Poverty rate data confirms that this is an even greater issue for working age people with disabilities in Nebraska. This information led to the agency's commitment to the Bridges Out of Poverty Model as a strategy to improve consumer satisfaction and engagement in the employment process. The results of the Comprehensive Statewide Assessment provided information about gaps in services for specific disability groups that are targeted for the development of community partnerships to increase long term and independent living supports.

Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation Goals and Priorities established in conjunction with the State Rehabilitation Council include

1. Increase the Rehabilitation Rate (as a part of meeting or exceeding each of the Federal Standards)

Each time a consumer receives services and is not successfully employed, the agency loses staff time, funds for purchased services and very likely the consumers satisfaction with VR services. The agency's rehab rate has increased in recent years and, at 62% during FY2008, is above the national standard of 55.8%. We believe we can do better and conserve the limited resources of time and money, as well as the consumers positive attitude toward the agency.

Measures: Increase the rehabilitation rate to 65%.

2. Increase the Quality and Timeliness of Services

The time that it takes for consumers to achieve their goals is an important factor as VR maintains its relevancy to individuals in need of services. The development of an alternative process that responds to the increasing number of consumers who are coming to VR as a result of layoffs due to the economy will allow for expedited services. A focus on the transferrable job skills of these consumers will lead to employment opportunities with commensurate pay and medical benefits. Quicker access to job data, case service information and forms through the use of mobile technology will assist field staff in the provision of assistance to consumers.

Decreasing the time that a consumer can move through the VR process can result in a corresponding decrease in the quality of VR services if processes are not established to monitor and ensure the

appropriateness of plans and services. The agency utilizes a case review process for closed cases within a targeted area of service. These reviews will be supplemented with the development of a team review process focusing on the Individualized Plan for Employment for open cases.

Measures: (1) Decrease in the amount of time that a consumer is in Employment Services from a 2007 baseline of 70.5 days per job search to 55 days per job search in FY 2010.

(2) The average consumer wage will increase from a 2007 baseline of \$9.67 to \$11.00 in FY 2010.

(3) Development of a policy for the use of mobile information technology based on staff role and responsibility.

(4) A decrease in the number of inappropriate plans identified in the review of closed cases.

3. Improve consumer satisfaction and engagement

The consumers satisfaction with VR services, their engagement in the VR program and their belief that they will be employed is perhaps the most important determinates in their success. Therefore this important goal is critical to our success as a program. The agency will begin implementation of the Bridges Out of Poverty Model to increase VR staff awareness and knowledge of the barriers to employment as a result of poverty in order to better prepare them to recognize and successfully address those issues with consumers. The Bridges Out of Poverty Model will also be used to engage consumers in the decision-making process as they work toward achieving their goals.

Measures: (1) A satisfactory rating of 98% or higher will be achieved on Consumer Satisfaction Surveys conducted at four (4) critical points in the employment process..

(2) A critical mass of 40% of Vocational Rehabilitation staff will make a commitment to the principles of the Bridges Out of Poverty Model.

(3) At least twelve (12) consumers will participate in the Getting Ahead Workshops at two (2) pilot sites.

4. Develop Effective Community Partnerships to Increase Long Term and Independent Living Supports

Partnerships provide additional supports that are needed for a consumer to be successful and generally occur in the program areas of transition, traumatic brain injury, behavioral health, juvenile justice and corrections. A partnership is collaboration with another entity that can play in important role in providing needed supports and services for consumers. It may or may not involve an exchange of funds. It is characterized by VR staff involvement, shared responsibility within the team, and a focus on long-term relationships that involves multiple consumers. It is not the same as a referral source that refers consumers to VR for services, but there is no further collaboration. Focusing on the development of partnerships that provide for long term and independent living support will be critical to address issues, such as those that are related to poverty, that impact on consumer job readiness and the ability to keep a job.

Measures: The agency will develop six (6) new community partnerships (one (1) for each area) that combined will contribute to at least sixty (60) successful employment outcomes during FY 2010.

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State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program

Nebraska Division of Rehabilitation Services - State Department of Education State Plan for Fiscal Year 2010 (submitted FY 2009)

Attachment 4.11(c)(3) Order of Selection

- Identify the order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services.
- Identify the justification for the order.
- Identify the service and outcome goals.
- Identify the time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order.
- Describe how individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities.

Justification for order of selection

Attachment 4.11(c)(3): Order of Selection

Justification of the Order of Selection

Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation has operated under an Order of Selection for more than twenty (20) years when the agency concluded it did not have sufficient funding to serve all eligible individuals.

While there have been times since the initial Order of Selection when the agency has had a waiting list for all three priority categories, the agency has for at least the last 10 years been able to serve all eligible individuals from Priority Group 1 and 2 without a waiting period and expect to continue doing so in 2010.

That has not been the case with Priority category 3. No individuals from this group have been served since the inception of the Order of Selection. While individuals in Priority category 3 have the option of being placed on a wait list, few have chosen to do so. In reviewing RSA 113 data for FY 2000 to present, between 1 and 4 individuals each year elect to be placed on the waiting list; however, within 6-9 months, those individuals then decided to be removed from the list.

In 2006, the agency was informed by RSA that its Order of Selection policy, approved by RSA several years earlier, was not consistent with the Rehabilitation Act and Regulations. A new Order of Selection policy was developed in collaboration with RSA. It was then necessary to revise Nebraska Department of Education Administrative Rules Title 92, Chapter 72 before the policy could be implemented July 1, 2008.

Description of Priority categories

Order of Selection Policy

Individuals who have a determination of eligibility or priority within the Order of Selection made during the fiscal year will be selected for the provision of planned vocational rehabilitation services in the following order, to the extent it is determined the personnel and fiscal resources necessary to carry out their Individualized Plans for Employment are available for them.

Priority category one: All eligible persons who are determined, on the basis of an assessment of eligibility and rehabilitation needs, to be individuals with the most significant disabilities as defined below.

Priority category two: All eligible persons who are determined, on the basis of an assessment of eligibility and rehabilitation needs, to be individuals with significant disabilities as defined below.

Priority category three: All other persons who are determined, on the basis of an assessment of eligibility and rehabilitation needs, to be individuals with disabilities as defined below.

Priority category one: The Rehabilitation Act requires persons with the most significant disabilities receive services before other eligible persons.

An individual with the most significant disability is one:

1. Who has a severe physical or mental impairment that seriously limits two or more functional areas (mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, or work skills) in terms of an employment outcome, and
2. Who requires multiple services over an extended period of time, and

3. Who has one or more physical or mental impairments resulting from amputation, arthritis, autism, burn injury, cancer, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, deafness, head injury, heart disease, hemiplegia, hemophilia, respiratory or pulmonary dysfunction, mental retardation, mental illness, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, musculo-skeletal disorders, neurological disorders (including stroke and epilepsy), spinal cord injuries, including paraplegia and quadriplegia, sickle cell anemia, specific learning disability, end-stage renal disease, or another disability or combination of disabilities determined on the basis of an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs to cause comparable substantial functional limitations.

Priority category two: This priority group provides a priority to all persons with significant disabilities and is consistent with the intent of the Rehabilitation Act to focus services on persons with significant disabilities.

An individual with a significant disability is one:

1. Who has a severe physical or mental impairment that seriously limits one functional area (mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, or work skills) in terms of an employment outcome, and

2. Who requires multiple services over an extended period of time, and

3. Who has one or more physical or mental impairments resulting from amputation, arthritis, autism, burn injury, cancer, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, deafness, head injury, heart disease, hemiplegia, hemophilia, respiratory or pulmonary dysfunction, mental retardation, mental illness, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, musculo-skeletal disorders, neurological disorders (including stroke and epilepsy), spinal cord injuries, including paraplegia and quadriplegia, sickle cell anemia, specific learning disability, end-stage renal disease, or another disability or combination of disabilities determined on the basis of an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs to cause comparable substantial functional limitations.

Individuals who receive Social Security Disability Insurance (DDSI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) automatically qualify for priority group two and are assessed to determine whether they qualify for priority group one.

Priority category three: This priority group contains all other eligible persons, and assures that persons with the most significant disabilities and persons with significant disabilities are selected for service before all other persons with disabilities.

All other eligible individuals.

Priority of categories to receive VR services under the order

Service and outcome goals and the time within which the goals will be achieved

Service and outcome goals for persons served during FY 2010

Recipient Priority Served Rehabilitated

Priority category 1 2,204 602

Priority category 2 3,597 941

Priority category 3 0 0

Total 5,801 1,543

Time Frames

Eligibility: All individuals have a determination of their eligibility made within 60 days of application unless there are mutually agreed upon extensions.

IPE: All eligible individuals in Priority categories 1 and 2 continue with plan development with a goal of achieving a mutually agreed upon and approved IPE within 90 days. Plan development does not occur with those few individuals in Priority category 3 who elected to be placed on the

waiting list.

Average months from application to successful employment outcome:

While the agency has averaged 18.7 months from application to successful employment outcome for individuals served in Priority categories 1 & 2, this average will likely grow as a result of an agency policy change beginning FY 09 with respect to bringing Transition students into the VR program earlier in their secondary program. IPE development with secondary students typically takes longer than with adults. The agency will need to have at least one year of experience under this policy in order to realize the full effect on this time frame.

Priority Category	Number of individuals to be served	Outcome goals 26s	Outcome goals 28s	Time within which goals are to be achieved	Cost of services
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					

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State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program

Nebraska Division of Rehabilitation Services - State Department of Education State Plan for Fiscal Year 2010 (submitted FY 2009)

Attachment 4.11(c)(4) Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI, Part B Funds

Specify the state's goals and priorities with respect to the distribution of funds received under section 622 of the Act for the provision of supported employment services.

Attachment 4.11(c)(4): Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI, Part B Funds

Goal

To maintain or increase the number of persons with a most significant mental health disability served

through a mental health partnership using an evidenced based model supported employment services.

Number served in FY 2008 839

To meet or increase the number of persons with a most significant mental health disability who achieve a competitive successful employment outcome through a mental health partnership using an evidenced based model supported employment services.

Number of successful employment outcomes in FY 2008 213

Plans For Distribution Of Title VI-B Funds

The funds received under Title VI, Part B will be distributed in the form of contractual payments for the costs of supported employment services provided to eligible persons with the most significant behavioral health disabilities. Vocational Rehabilitation has a written agreement with the states Division of Behavioral Health Services that promotes evidence-based supported employment services to individuals with behavioral health disabilities. Written contracts have been established with a qualified provider in each of the states six regions. These contracts identify the need for supported employment, the specific evidence-based supported employment services available from the provider leading to competitive employment in a supported employment setting which may include Transitional Employment, and their negotiated projected outcomes. The Division of Behavioral Health Services also provides funds for supported employment and extended services.

Each contract promotes shared responsibility for outcomes. Each provider, based on negotiated projected outcomes, will receive as quarterly allotments 60% of the maximum VR funding available. The remaining 40% are incentive payments paid out per outcome up to, but not exceeding, the negotiated projected outcomes.

The projected cost of the contracts exceeds the VI-B Funds allocation and is supplemented with Section 110 Funds.

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State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program

Nebraska Division of Rehabilitation Services - State Department of Education State Plan for Fiscal Year 2010 (submitted FY 2009)

Attachment 4.11(d) State's Strategies

This attachment should include required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the vocational rehabilitation and the supported employment programs. See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Act and Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA.)

- Describe the methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities.
- Identify how a broad range of assistive technology services and assistive technology devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities at each stage of the rehabilitation process.
- Describe how assistive technology services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities on a statewide basis.
- Identify what outreach procedures will be used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including those with the most significant disabilities.

- Identify what outreach procedures will be used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program.
- Identify plans for establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation programs, if applicable.
- Describe strategies to improve the performance with respect to the evaluation standards and performance indicators.
- Describe strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce investment system in assisting individuals with disabilities.
- Describe how the agency's strategies will be used to:
 - achieve the goals and priorities identified in Attachment 4.11(c)(1);
 - support innovation and expansion activities; and
 - overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the state Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and the state Supported Employment Services Program.

Attachment 4.11(d): States Strategies and Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities

The States strategies and use of Title I funds for Innovation and Expansion activities flow out of the areas of need identified as a result of the comprehensive statewide assessment. Statistical and demographic information, staff and consumer surveys, and key informant input from partnership sources were used to establish the general areas of priority and included: transition, a focus on employer relationships, enhancing consumer satisfaction through identification of areas for improvement, improved consumer engagement through enhanced follow up services (including quality assurance case reviews and Employment Warranty® monitoring) and the Bridges Out of Poverty initiative, and efforts to enhance or expand services to unserved or underserved populations (palliative care and acquired brain injury). These general areas are supported by the vocational rehabilitation service needs identified in the comprehensive statewide assessment.

In collaboration with the State Rehabilitation Council, detailed strategies and activities were developed for each of the following priority areas

Transition Research demonstrates that students with disabilities are more successful in transitioning to employment and adult life where Vocational Rehabilitation, educators and adult agencies begin the process by age 14, unify planning and share resources. Therefore, Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation will either continue or initiate the following:

- (1) Outreach to students entering high school from middle schools.
- (2) Utilize the Transition IPE Booklet to engage students in career exploration, career planning, career activities and career decisions.
- (3) Disseminate publications and information to transition students and their families.
- (4) Develop statewide and regional Youth Leadership Councils that will provide students with opportunities to develop leadership skills.
- (5) Develop a discharge planning protocol for use by juvenile justice facilities for releasing students to their home school districts.
- (6) Utilize the results of the Transition Survey to schools conducted by the State Rehabilitation Council to improve the partnership between VR and the schools.
- (7) Coordinate with the Nebraska Department of Education and the Department of Labor-Workforce Development on implementing the Career Management System that will be available to all schools.
- (8) Design within QUEST II a better method for collecting and recording transition data in order to provide necessary reports to staff and schools.
- (9) Partner with Assistive Technology Partnership (ATP) in a demonstration project to increase the use of assistive technology in secondary schools.
- (10) Develop additional scholarships with businesses targeted to graduating transition students to support employment related education and training.

Employment Services The benefits of employer/vocational rehabilitation partnerships are well documented in recent rehabilitation research. Employers benefit from 1) a diverse workforce, 2) access to a wider range of qualified candidates, 3) reduced turnover and improved attendance of

workers and 4) learning how to meet workers accommodations needs. Rehabilitation benefits from 1) improved knowledge of business culture and needs, 2) increased employment opportunities for people with disabilities, 3) realistic skills training and 4) enhanced consumer satisfaction. Therefore, Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation will either continue or initiate the following:

- (1) Target employers and industries based on labor market information, future occupational trends and quality jobs.
- (2) Establish long-term relationship with key employers.
- (3) Utilize the National Employment Network, The NET, to connect local labor demands with regional and national opportunities.
- (4) Develop and implement Project Search, a training and employment program targeting hospitals, to increase employment opportunities within the healthcare industry.
- (5) Develop and utilize job retention videos in an effort to improve our rehabilitation rate.
- (6) Conduct a job placement roundtable where placement staff will develop collaborative strategies to increase job opportunities for consumers statewide.

(7) Develop employer internship opportunities for consumers pursuing post-secondary degrees. Consumer Satisfaction Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation has used various methods over the years of gathering consumer satisfaction. These efforts have yielded limited response and limited value in the information received. In order to improve our program and insure that the program is meeting the needs of our consumers, Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation must develop effective methods of gathering meaningful consumer satisfaction information. Therefore, Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation will either continue or initiate the following:

- (1) Continue to develop and refine consumer satisfaction surveys to gather timely and meaningful feedback.
- (2) Utilize the survey services of the State Rehabilitation Council.
- (3) Contract with outsourced Employment Warranty® monitors to conduct consumer satisfaction survey by phone with consumers after services.
- (4) Evaluate the goal alignment process that was developed through the technical assistance provided by the American Society for Quality.
- (5) Utilize reports from the Client Assistance Program to focus on identified needed areas for improvement.

Employment Outcomes Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation continues to see ways to improve the rehabilitation rate of the program. Therefore, Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation will either continue or initiate the following:

- (1) Continue to survey consumers as they complete major milestones in the rehabilitation process to determine planning, readiness, and other factors that contribute to successful outcomes.
- (2) Conduct case reviews to determine factors that contribute to improving our rehabilitation rate.
- (3) Introduce staff through training to the Bridges Out Of Poverty model to assess their commitment to address poverty issues that often lead to unsuccessful outcomes.
- (4) Improve the frequency and quality of Vocational Rehabilitation contact and follow-up with consumers throughout the Vocational Rehabilitation process to keep the consumers engaged in their program or services.
- (5) Continue to utilize the placement standards and evaluate performance.

Employment Warranty® This program helps consumers regain, maintain and advance in employment. Monitoring with consumers at 90 days, 180 days and 1-year following their employment outcome, promotes greater job stability for those with significant disabilities who have the least community supports available to them.

- (1) Identify data elements for collection and measurement to evaluate the long-term employment outcomes of consumers.
- (2) Program QUEST II to support Employment Warranty® monitoring and data collection.
- (3) Continue contract with Easter Seals of Nebraska for Employment Warranty® monitoring to conduct the monitoring with consumers for up to one year after their employment outcome.

Innovation and Expansion I&E funds will be used to support these areas and related activities
Acquired Brain Injury Specialization The salary for the Program Director will be funded from I&E to provide oversight for the agency's HRSA's TBI Implementation Grant and other targeted ABI activities in the agency.

Bridges Out of Poverty I&E funds will be used to facilitate the implementation of the Bridges philosophy throughout the agency including training facilitators and supporting the involvement of

consumers to enhance service delivery systems.

State Independent Living Council I&E funds will be used for full support of the activities of the State Independent Living Council.

State Rehabilitation Council I&E funds will be used for full support of the activities of the State Rehabilitation Council.

Contracts and Grants Specialist I&E funds will be used to pay the salary of this position.

Transition Program and the Youth Leadership Council I&E funds will be used for 90% of the salary for the Transition Program Director and 50% of the salary of the Youth Leadership Council Coordinator in conjunction with Special Education.

Assistive Technology The agency grants funds to the Nebraska Assistive Technology Partnership (ATP) to provide rehabilitation engineering and assistive technology services to agency consumers at all stages of the rehabilitation process. Consumers are referred to ATP by VR staff for all assistive technology assessments, funding coordination and assistive technology solutions. ATP offices are located throughout the state and in some cities are co-located with the VR office. Based on referral data available at the writing of this plan, the VR agency is expected to make over 500 referrals to ATP.

The agency funds a demonstration project to expand the awareness and knowledge of secondary educators in the use of assistive technology for students.

Individuals with Disabilities who are Minorities The agency continues its commitment to the hiring of bilingual staff. At present, the agency has four bilingual staff members. In an attempt to increase the hiring of bilingual staff, we offer a salary differential incentive. Program materials are offered in Spanish.

There are three Indian Reservations in Nebraska. VR has one representative on the Nebraska Department of Education Native American Education Advisory Council.

Individuals with Significant Disabilities Since Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation has only been serving individuals with significant or most significant disabilities for more than 15 years, our outreach to individuals with significant disabilities continues to be effective.

Individual who have been Unserved or Underserved The Client Assistance Program (CAP) each year assesses the VR agency's outreach to unserved and underserved individuals with disabilities and will provide comment to the agency if CAP found the agency to be remiss in this area.

Some examples of the agency's efforts on behalf of individuals who are unserved or underserved are as follows:

Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation participates in a palliative care initiative for individuals who are not working due to chronic pain. The goal of the project is to help individuals to go to work following pain management services.

Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation serves on the TBI Council which is funded through a HRSA grant. The Council is focused on re-establishing a statewide Brain Injury Association in Nebraska and promoting state legislation and funding for services to individuals with TBI in Nebraska. The Brain Injury Screening Tool is now being administered statewide to all applicants for VR services to aid in the identification of previously undiagnosed brain injuries and residual impediments to employment. Information about Vocational Rehabilitation services is being sent to all individuals identified through the Nebraska Traumatic Brain Injury Registry.

Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation is expanding its services to the Criminal Justice population by assigning staff to the Adult Drug Court, Specialized Substance Abuse Services, and the Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center Geneva.

Plan for Establishing Community Rehabilitation Programs Since Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation provides direct services in the areas of vocational evaluation, independent living, and job placement, the agency has no plans for establishing any additional community rehabilitation programs. The agency does contract with those community rehabilitation programs that provide evidence-based supported employment services to individuals with behavioral health impairments and acquired brain injury.

Assisting Components of the Workforce Investment System in Assisting Individuals with Disabilities Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation continues to have representation on all the local WIA boards, serve on the local One Stop Career Center management council at some of the centers, have VR staff at each local One Stop Career Center on an itinerant basis.

Presentations are made to Center staff on vocational rehabilitation services and other topics related

to serving individuals with disabilities. One Stop staff have standing invitations to attend VR's Medical Aspects training programs.

This screen was last updated on Aug 11 2009 11:25AM by Cinda Wacker

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State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program

Nebraska Division of Rehabilitation Services - State Department of Education State Plan for Fiscal Year 2010 (submitted FY 2009)

Attachment 4.11(e)(2) Evaluation and Reports of Progress

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and Supported Employment (SE) Goals

1. Clearly identify all VR program goals consistent with the goals described in the most recently submitted version of Attachment 4.11(c)(1), including an evaluation of the extent to which the VR program goals were achieved.
 - Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.
 - Provide a description of the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.

Attachment 4.11(e)(2): Evaluation and Report of Progress in Achieving Identified Goals and Priorities and Use Of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities

The following presents our evaluation and report of progress for FY 2008.

1. Strategies to Address Needs Identified in the Comprehensive Assessment and to Achieve Identified Goals and Priorities

Needs identified in the comprehensive statewide assessment of needs, and to achieve greater success in our identified goal and priority areas are addressed by focusing our strategic activities and the expenditure of innovation and expansion funds on the six program dimensions listed below.

Transition uses shared resources to begin a coordinated planning process for the post-school years when students with disabilities reach age 14.

In FY 2008, we:

- (1) Continued to participate in a work group that is developing the Career Management System through the Nebraska Department of Education.
- (2) Hired Youth Leadership Facilitator to develop statewide and regional Youth Leadership Councils in partnership with Special Education. The membership is comprised of students with disabilities throughout the state.
- (3) Designed a youth-oriented IPE booklet to use with transition students.
- (4) Facilitated the interagency statewide Transition Practitioner Committee whose purpose is to assess transition services and make recommendations for future directions.
- (5) Facilitated the Statewide Transition Advisory Committee to promote school-based transition activities and identified barriers at the local level.
- (6) Convened regular meetings of the intra-agency Transition Committee (members are staff from all areas of the state) to provide input for agency policy and procedure development.
- (7) Continued to disseminate transition Making It Work publication and the Family Planners to participants in the transition program.

(8) Continued to disseminate the report to individual schools that list students involved in transition. The report identifies the milestone the student is in.

(9) Continued employment information sessions, post-secondary awareness fairs, employer tours and career fairs for students.

(10) Developed priority to increase level of staff support to provide work-based learning activities to students, ages 14-21.

(11) Held the annual transition roundtable to develop transition initiatives.

(12) Developed partnership with Geneva Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center.

The activities noted above served to increase the number of students served in Transition and to improve the quality of our transitions services. For FY2008, successful employment outcomes for consumers who entered the Employment Program from our Transition Program increased from 275 to 307. Within the Transition Program, employment outcomes increased from 219 to 251. Total number of students served in our Transition program increased from 3,642 to 3,800.

Innovation and Expansion (I & E) funding was used when appropriate and necessary to support activities related to this program dimension.

Employment Services promotes provision of state of the art, value added direct services by VR staff.

In FY 2008, we:

(1) Conducted quarterly reviews of all placement files to make sure placement standards were followed and maintained.

(2) Continued to expand transition scholarships with Nebraska businesses which led to 42 students being offered scholarships.

(3) Continued to market businesses throughout the state.

(4) Began exploring work experience sites for consumers participating in 2-year degrees.

(5) Began process of establishing Project Search in hospitals in Nebraska.

(7) Held monthly statewide employment committee meetings to develop direction for placement.

(8) Established work opportunities at home with Convergys, West, Westat, Marriott, J. Lodge.

(9) Monitored JSS and employment committee meetings across the state so that we meet placement standards.

(10) Participated on the 4-state employment committee.

(11) Represented Nebraska as point of contact on The NET.

(12) Updated job seeker section of the agency's external website.

(13) Developed job retention video for use with adults and students.

Based on the successful employment outcomes for 2008 noted below under Employment Outcomes, these employment services activities carried out by our Employment Specialists contributed to the agency achieving 1,543 successful employment outcomes, the highest number of outcomes in the last 9 years.

Consumer Satisfaction created an effective system for assessing consumer satisfaction during and following their program of rehabilitation with the objective of using the consumer feedback to make enhancements to the VR program.

(1) Developed and piloted at the direction of the State Rehabilitation Council, a series of consumer satisfaction surveys that clients complete throughout the rehabilitation process.

These surveys are available in electronic and print format.

(1)(2) Designed a real-time reporting system that is utilized by the teams to assess the degree of consumer satisfaction.

(2)(3) Reported survey results are tabulated by the Client Assistance Program and provided to the State Rehabilitation Council at each of the meetings throughout the year.

(3)(4) Requested quarterly reports from the Client Assistance Program on the type of client concerns and CAPs recommendations to VR leadership.

(5) Conducted Rule 72 public hearing and invited comment.

Consumer satisfaction surveys conducted at different points in the VR process were drafted at the direction of the SRC, piloted in FY2008, finalized, and made mandatory for all VR offices beginning October 1, 2008. There are pamphlet and electronic versions available to consumers. The pamphlets can be viewed at <http://ncrtm.org/course/view.php?id=100> under Consumer Satisfaction.

Innovation and Expansion (I & E) funding was used when appropriate and necessary to support SRC activities related to this program dimension.

Employment Outcomes identify and implement strategies and processes to achieve a rehabilitation rate at or above 65%.

In FY 2008, we:

- (1) Conducted statewide case reviews focusing on unsuccessful outcomes and made recommendations to address areas needing improvement.
- (2) Increased employment opportunities through partnerships with employers.
- (3) Encouraged teams to staff all cases before closing as unsuccessful.
- (4) Developed DVDs for use with consumers to emphasize retention strategies.
- (5) Provided four (4) training DVDs on disability and employment for staff statewide.
- (6) Continued contract with Easter Seals Nebraska to provide PASS Plan development, benefits analysis, and information on work incentives to active cases.

In FY 2008, the agency achieved 1,543 successful employment outcomes. This was the 4th consecutive year that the agency had increased its successful employment outcome over the previous year. This trend is opposite that of the national VR program where employment outcomes have decreased over the previous year each of the last 4 years.

With a FY 2008 rehabilitation rate of 62.39%, the agency did not achieve a rehabilitation rate of 65% or higher. The rate was a slight improvement over its 2007 rehabilitation rate of 62.17%.

Innovation and Expansion (I & E) funding was used to support a Benefits Analysis contract with Easter Seals-Nebraska.

Employment Warranty® improve our system for gathering and evaluating data on consumer employment at 90 days, 180 days, and 1-year following the employment outcomes.

In FY 2008, we:

- (1) Contracted with Easter Seals Nebraska to monitor successful outcomes for up to one (1) year.
- (2) Enhanced the subprogram within our data system to include the Easter Seals Nebraska monitor that follows up with successful outcome consumers who are or were receiving Social Security. The subprogram provides electronic recording of monitoring results and updating of consumer records.
- (3) Have increased the number of Social Security recipients that have gone off all cash benefits.

Contracting with Easter Seals Nebraska resulted in a significant increase in the timeliness of the 90 day, 180 day and 1 year post outcome monitoring contacts. Prior to the contract, there was an unacceptable number of past due monitoring contacts by agency staff. By the end of FY 2008 which only encompassed 5 contract months, the Easter Seals monitors had significantly reduced the number of past due contacts.

Another purpose of monitoring is to identify consumers who may need post employment services. In FY 2008, 264 consumers either maintained employment, regained employment or advanced in employment as a result of post employment services as compare to 252 consumers in FY2007.

For 2008, Easter Seals reported that 28 successfully employed consumers who received SSDI or SSI had worked themselves off of cash benefits as compared to 3 consumers the previous year.

Innovation and Expansion (I & E) funding was used to support the Employment Warranty® Monitoring contract with Easter Seals-Nebraska.

2. Strategies to Carry out Outreach Activities to Identify and Serve Individuals with the Most Significant Disabilities Who are Minorities

Each team develops an outreach plan. As part of the planning, consideration is given on how to best serve minority populations. In addition to minority outreach through the teams, our transition strategy assists in reaching all racial and ethnic minority groups as they occur naturally in schools.

In FY 2008, we:

- (1) Continued our involvement with the Nebraska Department of Education Native American Initiative and working with the reservations.
- (2) Provided employer development services to Hispanic employers with bilingual staff where

available.

(3) Continued the priority of hiring bilingual staff. Increased pay is available for staff who are bilingual or have ASL skills.

(4) Identified and began developing partnerships with employers who are Hispanic.

(5) Increased the number of agency brochures and forms translated to other languages.

Our best indicator of the effectiveness of these strategies in FY 2008 is the Minority Access ratio of .86 the agency achieved which was an improvement over our FY 2007 ratio of .79 which fell below the federal standard.

3. Strategies to Overcome Identified Barriers Relating to Equitable Access to and Participation of Individuals with Disabilities in the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and the State Supported Employment Services Program

Identified barriers affecting access to and participation in vocational rehabilitation services include:

(1) Systemic barriers. Potential applicants with low incomes or in poverty survive on an intricate array of multiple income maintenance and human service supports. The rules, regulations, and requirements underlying these supports interact in unpredictable or unintended ways when participation in vocational rehabilitation services requires significant time or temporary employment for work trial or training purposes, threatening survival and creating substantial disincentives to vocational rehabilitation.

(2) Individual barriers. Potential applicants have multiple specific individual and family life circumstances and problems, which interact with each other to interfere with program participation and employment. While the nature of many of these problems is well known (e.g., transportation, child care, housing, etc.), their multiplicity and interactions, in and of themselves, create barriers to program participation and employment. We have developed an evidence-based employment assessment to identify home, community, and on the job issues that interfere with program participation and employment. This assessment is incorporated in the Discover the Job That Works for You booklet.

(3) Programmatic barriers. Other public programs working with low income and poverty populations encounter the same systemic and individual barriers. Programmatic barriers arise when disability is a complicating factor, and a different approach is required. While some programmatic barriers tie to program policies and practices, others result from staff ignorance of the functional impact of disability on work and independence, or from the cost impact of new approaches.

(1) Developed supported employment partnership for mental health in one region of the state without a program.

(2) Provided an evidence-based supported employment milestone model of service delivery.

(3) Continued to publicize the housing.ne.gov website to assist people with disabilities to get affordable housing near their worksite. Staff utilize this resource regularly.

(4) Continued to support and assist consumers in the use of the Alternative Financing and Telework loan programs.

(5) Continued to use the AT4All.com website which coordinates all available assistive technology for the state. This includes equipment available for loan, for sale, for demonstration and for give away.

(6) Continued the use of an agency-wide video remote interpreting service to address the shortage of sign language interpreters for the deaf in the rural areas of the state.

(7) Utilized Title I funds to supplement Title VI, Part B funds to adequately address the supported employment services in the state of Nebraska.

In comparing FY 2007 program indicators with FY 2008 program indicators, the program experienced an increase in consumers served and in successful employment outcome. Our conclusion would be that the strategies were effective with respect to access and participation in services.

Applied for Services

FY2008 - 4,376

FY2007 - 4,207

Eligible for Services

FY2008 - 3,908

FY2007 - 3,788

Started Services

FY2008 - 2,567

FY2007 - 2,450

Received Services

FY2008 - 5,760

FY2007 - 5,634

Successfully Employed

FY2008 - 1,543

FY2007 - 1,530

Supported Employment Outcomes

FY2008 - 249

FY2007 - 239

SE Mental Health Partnership Outcomes*

FY2008 - 214

FY2007 190

*SE Mental Health Partnership Outcomes are a subset of the Supported Employment Outcomes

4. Performance Accountability and Continuous Improvement

Performance accountability and continuous improvement is central to all strategies for meeting the vocational rehabilitation needs of individuals with significant and most significant disabilities in Nebraska. QUEST is our comprehensive information management system with the capacity to continuously capture and report data on critical processes and outcomes.

In FY 2008, we:

- (1) Continued to develop the second generation of the data system, QUEST II, to improve our efficiency and effectiveness.
- (2) Developed standardized processes to enhance efficiency in documentation.
- (3) Developed reports to support performance reporting and analysis

5. Innovation and Expansion

I & E funding totaling \$792,407 was used to support the following.

- (1) State Rehabilitation Council (\$21,645)
- (2) State Independent Living Council (\$174,559)
- (3) State Transition Program Director and a portion of Transition related activities (\$114,081)
- (4) Juvenile Justice Just Work Program in Omaha. (\$34,054)
- (5) Contracts and Grants Specialist position with the agency. (\$73,168)
- (6) Employment Warranty® Program and Benefits Analysis contracts with Easter Seals-Nebraska (\$374,900)

6. Standards and Indicators

The agency met all of the performance standards in FY 2008. Through the strategies and activities identified in this state plan, the agency expects to increase the margins by which it exceeds the federal standards.

2.

Identify all supported employment program goals consistent with the goals described in Attachment 4.11(c)(4), including an evaluation of the extent to which the supported employment program goals were achieved.

- Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.
- Provide a description of the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.

see #1

3. Provide an Assessment of the performance of the VR program on the standards and indicators for the most recently completed federal fiscal year.
see #1
4. Provide a report on how the funds reserved for innovation and expansion (I&E) activities were utilized in the most recent completed federal fiscal year.
see #1

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State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program

Nebraska Division of Rehabilitation Services - State Department of Education State Plan for Fiscal Year 2010 (submitted FY 2009)

Attachment 6.3 Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services

- Describe quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities
- Describe the timing of the transition to extended services

Attachment 6.3: Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services

Quality of supported employment services

All services provided will be of high quality, as judged by prevailing professional standards and such legal standards as may apply. Persons licensed, certified, or registered in accordance with the laws of the State of Nebraska to perform the services will render these services or, if the service is not regulated by the State, by persons who are able to demonstrate they are qualified by reason of education, training, and experience to perform the services.

Scope of supported employment services

The services made available by Vocational Rehabilitation using Title VI-C funds is limited to those initial services resulting in stable job performance in an integrated competitive work setting. These may include, as appropriate to individual needs:

1. An assessment of the need for supported employment services which is supplementary to and provided after an assessment of eligibility and rehabilitation need has determined that a person is eligible for services and is a person with a most significant disability.
2. Development and placement in integrated competitive employment for the maximum number of hours possible consistent with the persons unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, and capabilities.
3. Intensive on-the-job skills training and other training provided by skilled job trainers, co-workers, and other qualified persons. This training is based on a systematic analysis of the work to be performed, and a systematic analysis of the employers performance expectations and requirements. It is conducted in accordance with a written plan identifying the methods of teaching, instruction, and behavior management necessary to enable the individual to acquire skills and master the work to be performed, to regulate behavior in accordance with the employers requirements and expectations, and achieve stable job performance. The training provides for a systematic reduction

of intensive teaching, instruction, and behavior management methods to the lowest intervention level necessary to maintain stable job performance.

4. Other vocational rehabilitation services that are needed to achieve and maintain job stability including, but not limited to
 - a. Interpreter services for individuals with hearing impairments to permit communication between the individual and the skilled job trainer.
 - b. Occupational licenses and permits required by federal, state, and local law to perform an occupation.
 - c. Occupational tools and equipment required by the employer but not routinely provided to new employees.
 - d. Rehabilitation technology services including adaptations and modifications of the workplace.
 - e. Work clothing and uniforms required by the employer but not routinely provided to new employees, and safety shoes and other articles of clothing necessary to permit safe performance on the job.
 - f. Transportation from place of residence to the work site and return until the person can pay for the cost from earnings.
5. Follow-up services, including regular contact with the employer, the individual with a most significant disability, the individual's parents, guardian or other representative, in order to reinforce and stabilize the job placement.
6. On-going monitoring services from the time of job placement until the transition to extended services from one or more extended services providers. These services include, at a minimum, the assessment of employment stability and, based on that assessment, the coordination or provision of specific services needed to maintain employment stability.

Extent of supported employment services

1. Assessment of rehabilitation need for supported employment services are made available to the extent necessary to determine the nature and scope of services to be provided under an individualized written rehabilitation program to achieve supported employment.
2. Job development and placement services are provided to the extent necessary to place the individual into integrated competitive employment consistent with his or her informed choice, or to determine on the basis of clear evidence that an employment outcome cannot be achieved.
3. Intensive on-the-job and other training services are provided to the person to the extent necessary to achieve stable job performance, or to determine on the basis of clear evidence this cannot be achieved. Services are provided for a maximum of 18 cumulative months, beginning on the day the person starts the job, unless a longer period is provided in the individualized written rehabilitation program of the person.
4. Other services are made available to the extent necessary to support the individual in an individualized written rehabilitation program to achieve supported employment.
5. Follow-up services are provided to the individual to the extent necessary to assure that job stability has occurred, or to determine on the basis of clear evidence that job stability cannot be achieved.
6. On-going monitoring services are provided, at a minimum, twice monthly at the work site to assess employment stability and, based on that assessment, to coordinate or provide specific services needed to maintain employment stability. If off-site monitoring is determined to be appropriate, and is included in the persons individualized written rehabilitation program, it must, at a minimum, include two meetings with the person and one contact with the employer each month.

Transition to extended services

Vocational Rehabilitation transitions the person to extended services provided by other public agencies, nonprofit agencies or organizations, employers, natural supports, or other entities no later than 18 cumulative months after placement in supported employment (unless a longer period is established in the individualized written rehabilitation program), provided that

- " the person has made substantial progress toward meeting any hours per week work goal in the individualized written rehabilitation program,
- " the individual is stabilized on the job, and
- " extended services are available and can be provided without a hiatus in services.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number of this information collection is 1820-0500. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 25 hours per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data sources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate or suggestions for improving this form, please write to: U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C. 20202-4760. If you have any comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this form, write directly to: Carol Dobak, Chief of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program Unit, Rehabilitation Services Administration, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue S.W., PCP, Room 5014, Washington, D.C. 20202.